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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with what happens when students bring conventional assumptions about education to an unconventional alternative school. By field observation and interview, the author examined how alternative schools change the conventional patterns of hierarchy, formality, and the press to achieve; the assumptions students hold about the proper means and ends of education; and how any discrepancies between school demands and student assumptions are reflected in student behavior. The author challenges the assumption that alternative schools can establish socialization patterns oriented toward constructive social change merely by transforming the conventional institutional context. He asserts that socialization settings do not have uniform effects and that, if learning environments are to be designed so as to be capable of nurturing students' sense of personal efficacy, the range of assumptions that students bring with them should be acknowledged. In addition, any conceptualization of an "alternative" socialization process needs to go beyond an either/or reaction to the status quo and address the relationship between the internal context of an alternative school and the larger society. (Author/WM)

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WORKING-CLASS BOYS IN INNOVATIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS: EXPECTATIONS AND BEHAVIOR

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Cambridge, Mass.

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ABSTRACT

What happens when students bring conventional assumptions about education to an unconventional alternative school?

I investigated this question by conducting field observations and interviews with students and teachers at two public alternative junior high schools in a New England suburb. I studied three related questions: *How do the alternative schools change the conventional patterns of hierarchy, formality, and the press to achieve? What are students' assumptions about the proper means and ends of education? How are any discrepancies between school demands and student assumptions reflected in student behavior?*

I first describe the way these two "annex" schools modify conventional school socialization patterns: hierarchical authority persists, but in a more informal personalized context, with reduced emphasis on achievement. Each "annex" offers a range of learning settings: free periods and field trips deviated substantially from conventional school demands; classroom settings, despite individualization of instruction, retained largely conventional pedagogies. Unlike many alternative schools, the annex schools had little ideology directed at radical social

change. In sum, I found that the annex schools represented a mixed model, combining both "conventional" and "alternative" demands.

The annex students were predominantly white, middle class, with above average IQ's. I developed five modal patterns of student expectations from the interview responses: (1) Six "immersed" students had low occupational aspirations, limited time perspective, and low sense of fate control; they viewed themselves in a passive role, struggling to comply with school demands. (2) Four "negative" boys had similar background characteristics but rejected the annex schools, adopting a stance either of active rebellion or sullen withdrawl. (3) Seventeen "contented conventionals" had above average IQ's with stable, high mobility aspirations and high fate control; they incorporated the annex schools into a generally positive approach to school or else embraced the annex schools as relief from the conventional setting. (4) Six "conventional strivers" had high mobility aspirations and high IQ's; they rejected the annex schools as inconsistent with their own educational purposes. (5) Four "integrated academics" high in IQ's, aspirations, and fate control; they saw themselves as active initiators, independent of the annex context, which they found positive and supportive.

I observed student behavior across four learning settings: free periods, field trips, and two classrooms, one "open" and one "closed." For some students, the reduced supervision, formality, and achievement press of free periods and field trips ran counter to their own definition of appropriate educational practice. For these students, other schools, more conventional than the annexes, served as a positively valued reference group. Other students, however, embraced free periods and field trips as welcome release. For them, conventional schools were a negative reference group. The way a student acted depended on his evaluation of the annex schools vis-a-vis other salient "reference settings": behavior varied from setting to setting, reflecting the perceived discrepancies between the annex and their own educational ideas. In conclusion, I challenge the assumption that the alternative schools can establish socialization patterns oriented toward constructive social change merely by transforming the conventional institutional context. Socialization settings do not have uniform effects. If we are to design learning environments capable of nurturing students' sense of personal efficacy then we should acknowledge the range of assumptions that students bring with them. Further, any conceptualization of an "alternative" socialization process needs to go beyond an either/or reaction to the status quo and address the relationship between the internal context of an alternative school and the larger society in all its complexity and paradoxes.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Forty years ago George S. Counts charged public education with chief responsibility for social reform, posing the question, Dare the School Build a New Social Order?[1]

Today educators and social theorists are more likely to debate another question: "Could we build a new social order even if we wanted to?" Herbert Marcuse, for example, argues that the existing order easily contains and absorbs the forces of social change.[2] Sociologists conclude from a massive array of data that schools are underpowered in their efforts to attain goals like equality of educational opportunity.[3] Educators are left in doubt over the schools' capacity to generate social change.

Conventional schooling, in fact, seems to inhibit the prospects for change by serving a socialization function, preparing students for adult occupational roles as they now exist:

> The main business of socialization is the training of infants, children, adolescents (and sometimes adults) so that they can ultimately fulfill the

> social obligations that their society and culture will place upon them. Implicit in this statement is the expectation that, in meeting those societal demands, the individual will not be placed under so much strain as to fall apart psychologically.[4]

From this perspective the schools are well integrated with the society's economic and political institutions; children learn to adapt to the particular constraints of the status quo; they learn how to function in bureaucratic organizations that emphasize a hierarchical system of authority, "rational" formal procedures, and individual achievement.[5]

Some educational reformers (following Counts) find this conventional socialization pattern insidious. For them, the schools ought not perpetuate the existing order; schools should lead toward a utopian, vastly transformed society. In the extreme version of this view, schools should foster egalitarian rather than hierarchical authority arrangements, personal expression rather than adherence to formal procedures, and collaborative relationships over individual achievement and competition.

In recent years a number of educators have tried to create new educational settings based on these utopian values. These "alternative schools" are usually small, self-contained units. In contrast with conventional schools, they reduce coercion by adults, make more use of community resources, and place more emphasis on noncognitive goals.[6]

In my view conventional socialization patterns do operate to maintain the existing order, thus impinging on efforts to reconstruct American society. But alternative schools run a risk too: by socializing children into a nonexistent utopia, alternative schools may create adults unprepared to deal with the realities of economic and political life.[7]

I take the position that too many alternative schools simply reverse the goals of conventional schools. They substitute participatory democracy for hierarchical forms of authority; they try to replace individual accomplishment with an emphasis on group solidarity. Such efforts, in my view, represent an either/or approach to the task of "building a new social order," as if the ideal society **were** merely a reverse mirror image of what now prevails.

This either/or approach fails to acknowledge that our images of the "good society" are fraught with conflict and dilemmas. Our "American Creed" involves a number of contradictions.[8] For example, on the one hand we value individual diversity and freedom, criticizing the uniformity of the public schools. At the same time we yearn for group solidarity, deploring the high costs of academic competition. These value conflicts represent authentic dilemmas, suggesting that the good society consists of a balance of different values, not a monolithic manifestation of either "impulse expression" or a "need for control."[9]

From this perspective, the appropriate socialization task for schools is not to help people internalize a one-sided value system, whether conventional or alternative. A socialization pattern oriented toward social change would instead stem from the premise that

> the most creative way of meeting a given social situation may be to reject that situation as it presents itself, to insist on a new deal and to forge new roles and new styles of life. (italics added)[10]

The above formulation does not imply an automatic rejection of the environment, nor does it entail unthinking acquiescence to existing social forms. It does require a sense of personal efficacy and control over one's destiny -- a strength that permits a person to live within, yet question and even transform, the environment. It seems to me that this kind of personal strength is a prerequisite for either significant social change or creating a sensible personal balance among competing values.

It is from this perspective that I report a study of two alternative schools. These two schools are small, public junior high school programs, housed away from the local conventional junior high schools. The study consisted of extensive classroom observations and interviews with teachers and students.

I take the general position that experimenting with smaller, more flexible educational settings is a valuable enterprise, if only because such efforts introduce variety into our school systems. But the question of whether or not alternative schools should be formed is not my primary concern. I do not, for example, discuss the two schools in terms of achievement or other outcome measures. Those readers wishing to compare the "productivity" of conventional and alternative schools should look elsewhere.

Instead, as the above discussion suggests, my primary focus is on school as a socialization setting. I describe and discuss the extent to which these two alternative schools deviate from conventional socialization patterns and explore the distinctive ways that students respond to these somewhat innovative institutions. The basic research questions involved are *What demands do these two alternative schools place on their students? What expectations about the nature and purpose of schooling do these students bring to the schools? How do the students act in various alternative school settings?* In my view, the relationships between school demands, student expectations and student behavior explain some of the important problems faced by alternative schools and illustrate the conflicts involved in defining an appropriate model of "socialization for change."

In conducting the research, I took into consideration the fact that no institution, even an innovative one based on "emergent" values,[11] has uniform effects across a heterogeneous population. Most alternative schools, for example, employ innovative practices such as giving students large amounts of unscheduled or "free" time. For some students, free time might provide a chance to pursue outside interests or hobbies.

For others, the lack of external direction might prove threatening. The point is that a given institutional structure is perceived differently by different students; consequently it has multiple effects on those students.

Let us imagine, for example, a stereotypical alternative school. A group of teachers, in tune with radical theories of society, design a new school. The institutional structure they establish tries to (1) maximize student participation in decision making, (2) resolve conflicts by sensitive handling of each individual case rather than applying some external set of rules, and (3) include activities aimed at a variety of human skills and interests, not just cognitive facility.

In September a group of students, randomly selected from the community, come to the new alternative school. How do they adapt to their new environment? We can predict that some of them will cling to orthodox forms of classwork as the only legitimate way to learn; others will reject any vestiges of tradition. Many will feel conflicted about their new school. We can explain the students' various responses through the concept of discrepancy. The assumptions behind the institutional structure will be, in varying degrees, discrepant with the students' own assumptions about learning. Many students will experience a dissonance between what they observe and what they expected. Such discrepancies exert a pressure for change insofar as students must somehow accommodate to or assimilate the perceived discrepancies.[12]

If we, as educators, wish to control the impact of alternative schools on students -- if we wish to understand the pressures for change created by such schools, then we need to consider the magnitude of the discrepancies between the institutional structure and the students' expectations. If the school's demands (or "non-demands") and the students' assumptions are too incongruous, then the student may defend against the alternative school, rather than trying to cope with his or her new experience.[13] Conversely, where the student easily defines his or her surroundings as familiar or "old hat," there is no motivation for change.[14] When "moderate discrepancies" or "calculated incongruities" are introduced into a student's environments, the student has the opportunity to manage the perceived discrepancy in a variety of ways; he or she has a measure of control over the change that takes place. The central point here is that discrepancies are relative to the assumptions of the students.[15] No institutional setting has uniform socialization effects.

This study describes two alternative schools in terms of the discrepancies created for many students. First, I examine the institutional structure and the way the teachers work in terms of the demands placed on students -- what are the institutional constraints of these two schools, and how do they compare with conventional school demands? Second, I define the different patterns of expectations that students bring to the schools. Last, I look at the way students act in various school situations. The general explanatory model underlying this analysis is that a student's behavior is a kind of compromise between external demands and internal expectations.[16]

The exact nature of this compromise depends, in this framework, on the discrepancy between school demands and students' expectations. I identify different patterns of expectations and trace their "effects" on behavior. The end result of my analysis is paradoxical. I show how pervasive conventional socialization patterns are. Even in alternative schools students espouse conventional ideas about education and how they, as individuals, fit into the larger society. In this sense, it is true that alternative schools, despite strenuous efforts, are a variant of, rather than alternative to, conventional socialization patterns.[17] Yet at the same time the expressed resilience of many students -- their realistic but hopeful stance toward the future -- lends support to the idea that it is possible to create educational settings that provide a heterogeneous student population with opportunities to develop a sense of efficacy and control over the future.

The Research Strategy

This section repeats the basic research questions of the study and links those questions to specific research procedures.

I conducted the research from April, 1972 to April, 1973, at two alternative public junior high schools in a New England suburb. One school had eighty-seven students; the other had sixty-five. For the most part this paper focuses on the eighth grade boys at each school -- thirty-seven boys in all.

In order to understand the people and places under investigation as fully as possible, I used a number of research approaches. No single method could encompass the complexity of a natural setting; by employing a number of different techniques I felt my descriptions and conclusions would have more validity and reliability. It was for this same reason that I chose to study two alternative school settings: I hoped to avoid some of the pitfalls presented by the case study method.

Each of the basic research questions involved a different kind of task and, consequently, a different research methodology. Figure 1 summarizes the methods employed. To determine what the schools' institutional and classroom demands were, I and my co-observers spent some four months taking detailed field notes in different classrooms and meetings. Our notes consisted of running records of how teachers organized learning experiences for students -- the kind of tasks, the authority system in the classroom, the role relationships established among students and between students and teachers. These anthropological-type field notes sometimes focused primarily on teacher moves; at other times observers watched particular groups of students. Of great value in this first, "immersion" phase of the research were informal talks with students, teachers, and administrators -- at lunch periods,

FIGURE 1

Research Questions, Tasks and Methods

Question	Task	Method
1. What demands do these two alternative schools place on students?	1. Describing the institutional context and the organization of learning settings.	1. Field observations and teacher interviews.
2. What expectations do the students bring to schools?	2. Describing the patterns of assumptions about learning that students bring to the schools.	2. Student interviews.
3. How do the students act in various school settings?	3. Describing how students act in various alternative school settings.	3. Observing students in class; interview material.

on the gym field, during the teachers' summer workshop. In addition, I interviewed the four main subject teachers at each school. As I grew more familiar and friendly with people at the schools, my role as researcher shifted somewhat -- away from "outside observer" and closer to something like a "participant observer." This shift entailed both considerable benefit and considerable hazard.

For the second phase of the research I gathered data on student behavior in classroom settings, on field trips, and during free periods. Here I relied on two sources of information: Individual focused observations and interview material -- students were observed in two contrasting classroom situations. Observers made running records of students' actions and these records were later translated into a set of categories aimed at defining ranges of behavior as they occurred in different classrooms. Interviews provided information about students' behavior on field trips and in their free time. Behavior data was supplemented by the field notes of the first phase.

Last, in order to find out more about student goals, future expectations, and views about their current school situation, I interviewed all the eighth grade boys at both schools. The choice of this particular group resulted from several considerations: the eighth grade boys had experienced two years of the alternative school -- their views, then, would seem less subject to confounding "novelty effects" and also represent the cumulative effects of the setting; this group represented the widest social class mix; my previous teaching experience suggested that boys, more than girls, sometimes experienced the greatest discrepancy between their own educational expectations and the demands of an alternative school.

As with most researchers in "clinical settings," I focused on a relatively small problem only to find that it is quite difficult to isolate a manageable number of threads without unraveling the fabric as a whole. In looking at classrooms -- either as a teacher or researcher -- the number of important variables always exceeds the time and resources available for considering them. The scope and complexity of reality always exceeds the sum of possible explanatory theories.

In presenting this research, then, I have tried to avoid the presumption that my particular framework, my category system explains everything. I have tried to approach the two schools with the hope of shedding light on certain aspects of their reality.

In sum, my research strategy consisted of direct classroom observations and interviews; I set about establishing some relationships among school demands, student expectations, and behavior in the hopes of understanding some of the dilemmas and "trade-offs" encountered by students and teachers in alternative schools.

The Plan of Presentation

The next chapter looks at various educational reforms. Its purpose is to distinguish alternative school efforts from other kinds of educational innovation. The chapter pays special attention to the notion of school as an institutional context -- a place where students learn not only facts and skills, but certain patterns of behavior and styles of response. Chapter II, in short, elaborates the intellectual and historical framework that makes this particular study significant.

Chapter III describes the two schools' surrounding community, explains their origins, and, using field notes as the data base, discusses the institutional arrangements of each school. The key question guiding the analysis is, "How are these two schools different from and similar to other schools -- both conventional and alternative?"

The next chapter explores the teachers' ideologies as revealed in their interviews. To what extent do teachers define their own roles in terms of certain educational ideals? What seems to be the relationship between educational "theory" and "practice" at each school?

Chapter V elaborates the classroom demands made by each teacher. Using observational data, I describe different classrooms in terms of their authority structure, the nature of assigned tasks, and the role relationships established. This analysis of classroom demands is then related both to the teachers' ideologies and to the schools' general institutional structure. I also consider free periods and field trips.

Chapter VI presents background information on the eighth grade boys at each school, then, using interview material, distinguishes five separate patterns -- five modal types -- of student expectations and assumptions about schooling. I analyze the way students construe their present situation and the way they see their present school experience fitting in -- or not fitting in -- with past and future educational settings. I compare and contrast the five different types.

Using the five patterns as a base, Chapter VII looks at student behavior in four different settings: two classrooms, field trips, and free periods. Using both focused observations and interview data, I discuss the variation in student behavior in relation to the contrasting patterns identified in the previous chapter.

Chapter VIII reviews the study and discusses the relationships between school demands, students' expectations, and behavior, with particular reference to how students anticipate their high school experience. I return to the problem of defining an appropriate model of socialization for alternative schools.

Footnotes to Chapter I

[1] (New York: Arno Press, 1969. First edition, 1932.)

[2] One-Dimensional Man (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

[3] Christopher Jencks, Marshall Smith, Henry Acland, Mary Jo Bane, David Cohen, Herbert Gintis, Barbara Heyns, and Stephan Michelson, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1972).

[4] Alex Inkeles, "A Note on Social Structure and the Socialization of Competence," *Harvard Educational Review*, 36 (Summer 1966), p. 279.

[5] This socialization model and its "normative outcomes" are more fully elaborated in Chapter II.

[6] See Center for New Schools, "Strengthening Alternative Schools," *Harvard Educational Review*, 42 (February 1972), p. 317.

[7] See Jonathan Kozol, "Politics, Rage and Motivation in the Free Schools," *Harvard Educational Review*, 42 (August 1972).

[8] Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964. First edition, 1944).

[9] Philip Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), pp. 1-5.

[10] Inkeles, p. 279.

[11] George D. Spindler, "Education in a Transforming American Culture," *Harvard Educational Review*, 25 (Summer 1955), 145-156.

[12] Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957), p. 122.

[13] Jerome S. Bruner, "On Coping and Defending," in *Toward a Theory of Motivation* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1966), pp. 129-148.

[14] William G. Perry, Jr., Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970).

[15] This is, in part, an exercise in the phenomenology of alternative schools. For a related article, see Jerome Kagan, On the Need for Relativism," American Psychologist, 22 (1967), 131-142.

[16] See Daniel J. Levinson, "Role, Personality and Social Structure in the Organizational Setting," J. Abn. Soc. Psych., 58, #2, 170-180, 1959.

[17] See Talcott Parsons, "The School Class as a Social System," in Socialization and Schools, HER Reprint No. 1, 1968.

CHAPTER II

FROM CONTENT TO CONTEXT

Curriculum, like the hemline, changes with the season: urban studies and psychology challenge history's coveted position as 'the' subject; primary sources and paperbacks are in, textbooks are out. Various educational games and films come into vogue then depart. Catcher in the Rye replaces Silas Marner, then itself makes way for Manchild in the Promised Land.

Each year new anthologies, audiovisual materials, and simulation games flood the market.[1] Though some call this a process of "educational innovation," for the most part it is simply a vendor persuading us to buy his wares. Yet, for many teachers, educational innovation is precisely a matter of purchase, a question of selecting new content: Shall we buy a new set of books? How about this new film strip? And educational publishers indulge in a kind of planned obsolescence as they assemble ever more "relevant" products.

The Curriculum Revolution

In the early sixties, with Sputnik as his catalyst, Jerome Bruner called for a "curriculum revolution." Concerned with "the frightening gap between expert knowledge of our technology and public knowledge,"[2] Bruner sought to replace rote learning with inquiry, to implement a "discovery" model of instruction rather than a "recitation" model. For Bruner, the heart of learning lay not in the memorization of facts but in understanding the "structure of the discipline." "Man: A Course of Study," for example, asks students not to remember certain pieces of information but to act as amateur anthropologists:

> As children explore the implications of clues encountered, their general reasoning ability increases, and they formulate more and better hypotheses. We plan to design materials in which children have an opportunity to do this kind of thinking with questions related to the course . . . (I)f . . . clothing that people wore was made from the skin of the ibex, what can they infer about the size of a hunting party and how would they look for data.[3]

Following Bruner's lead, scholars in other fields introduced an inductive "inquiry" approach to their disciplines -- David Page's "new math," Edwin Fenton's "new social studies."[4] These curriculum reformers successfully enlisted the aid of university professors in their cause, but if they aimed at transforming the student's role as learner, they eventually settled for developing some high quality materials. Curriculum reformers were able to organize content in new ways -- replacing bland textbooks with more varied source materials, but the task of training students to inquire and discover proved more elusive. Despite a serious concern with pedagogy, Bruner and his followers did not have the means at their disposal to turn restless or unwilling students into miniature scholars.[5]

The Reaction against Bruner

In the late 1960's Bruner became the villain for some groups of educational reformers. The problems of "technological expertise" seemed less pressing in the face of racial struggles, assassinations, and war. The scope of injustice and destruction provided even more dramatic evidence than Sputnik that the schools ought to "do something."

This sense of upheaval in American society led many educators to change their priorities: Bruner's emphasis on cognitive inquiry seemed inadequate in the face of problems that sprang in part from emotional roots. Some educators thus called for "affective education," trying to correct for a preoccupation with intellectual development. Instead of "inquiry," the catch-word became "sensitivity." I find in this reaction against cognitive focus an unfortunate tendency to polarize the cognitive and affective "domains," as if educators somehow had to choose between the two.[6]

This group of "affective educators" based their work on a far less explicit model of learning and development. There was no real parallel to the cognitive developmental scheme of Piaget and Bruner in the affective realm. The theoretical underpinnings of psychological education came more from various insights of Maslow (1962) and Perls (1965) than from any general framework of development. Jones (1968) has made an attempt to link the insights of Bruner with the theories of Erik Erikson.

This call for psychological education was answered by yet more relevant books and games, to be sure. But this new priority focused less on specific content and more on educational techniques and methods:

> The . . . infusion into elementary and secondary classrooms of new curriculs . . . has already altered the formats of teacher training and certification.
>
> The emphasis of this influence is on instructional materials . . . Corresponding experimentation with new instructional methods, which the new materials often vaguely demand but cannot themselves supply, has not been proceeding apace.[7]

For many "psychological educators," the key to emotional growth resided in applying new techniques: improvisational drama, role playing, sensitivity group exercises, nonverbal communication, and meditation. Despite rationales of varying specificity and coherence, the main focus was on letting emotions play a legitimate role in classroom activities, and new pedagogical methods provided the vehicle for expressive behavior. For many in this group, the classroom "content" was immediate experience itself; the teacher's task was to facilitate a wider range of emotional expression via various exercises, questions, and so forth.

We have, then, two parallel shifts. When some educators sought to change educational priorities from cognitive to emotional goals, they also, to some extent, switched their focus from materials to methods. These shifts tended to dichotomize the cognitive and affective realms, and we need not rely on an either/or view of materials vs. methods. But despite these differences in emphasis, both groups of educational reformers restrict their attention to the same target: classroom teaching, the formal agenda of schools. The cognitive/affective, materials/methods debate takes place within classrooms. Both groups share the assumption that the principal effects of school reside in classroom strategy. In this view school is esentially an accumulation of lesson plans, and the job of educational reformers is to create more powerful lesson plans.

School as an Institutional Context: "The Hidden Curriculum"

A growing number of educational thinkers -- first researchers, later practitioners -- have challenged the assumption that school's main impact lies in explicit instructional activities. Instead, they argue, it is the context of learning that exerts the most powerful influence; the forms of educational experience make more of a difference than what goes on inside those forms:

> Every school represents to its students a model of society and its possibilities. In the very composition of the students and teachers, in the authority and decision-making structure of the school, in the ways that people talk with one another, learn and work and play together, and in the expectations the school holds for its students -- in all these ways and more, the school instructs about society.
>
> We are accustomed to thinking of content as the most important learning a school conveys to its students. It is the structure of the school, however, that instructs most systematically, and it is this structure that the students respond to first and remember longest.[8]

"Hidden curriculum" became the key phrase for those who rallied to this point of view. The notion is that the most potent effects of schooling are "hidden." For some people, the hiddenness simply represents the unintended consequences of social actions; for others, the hiddenness smacks of exploitative conspiracy. But for both sets of people, if any fundamental reform of schools is to take place, that reform must address the school's implicit lessons.

A substantial (though scattered) body of literature focuses on the hidden curriculum,and I will briefly review some of the research. But we begin with a distinction between research and intervention: although many researchers argue that the context is the crucial dimension of schooling, and though some levy massive criticism at the injustices of that context, few take the step of prescribing alternatives to the present way of organizing the school environment. The hidden curriculum theorists speak from a stance of research, not one of intervention. Their principal concern lies in describing what _is_, not recommending what _ought_ to be. Yet their work provides essential background for that group of educators for whom context is not simply a frame of reference but a dimension for reform. By summarizing some of the research in this area I indicate some of the intellectual roots of the present study and at the same time explain some of the principal issues at stake for alternative schools.

Context as a Frame of Reference

One way of clarifying the preceding discussion is to picture a series of three boxes of increasing size, each one placed inside the next largest one. The boxes represent increasingly broad aspects of schooling. The smallest box stands for the classroom: it contains both materials and methods. Next comes the aspect currently under discussion, the institutional context. The largest box represents society.

The "context" box is the school itself, and it is this box that represents the hidden curriculum. But we can distinguish between two parts of the box -- its outside wall and its inside wall. The outside wall faces society, the inside wall contains the classrooms, courses, content, and methods. We find, then, "two sides" of the research on school-as-a-context: the _external_ side considers the way school fits into the larger society and the way children are socialized into the adult world; the _internal_ side views school as a microcosm -- societies in miniature with hierarchies, factions, social norms -- and it is the social process of that microcosm which occupies the center of attention.

In the next sections I review (1) the literature that describes the way schools socialize children into the larger society (the external context), and (2) the research focusing on the school as a self-contained social system (the internal context). But if the "inside" and "outside" walls of the box are separate, they are also two surfaces of the same structure, and it is clear that the internal and external contexts have many connections.

The External Context. Many sociologists portray the school as functionally related to other institutions of the society: the school acts as a sorting mechanism, allocating students to different strata of the adult society; it also legitimizes social stratification through its emphasis on achievement and merit.

Parsons (1959) and Dreeben (1968) describe this socialization process as a necessary, even inevitable, aspect of maintaining a complex, industrialized society. Parsons defines the socialization process as

> (1) an emancipation of the child from primary emotional attachment to his family, (2) an internalization of a level of societal values and norms that is a step higher than those he can learn in his family alone, (3) a differentiation of the school class in terms . . . of actual achievement . . . , and (4) from society's point of view, a selection and allocation of its human resources relative to the adult role system.[9]

Dreeben, building on this framework, further elaborates the "normative outcomes" of schooling required for successful adaptation to industrial society: independence, achievement, universalism, and specificity.[10] In less abstract language, these terms mean that students learn to do things on their own -- they aren't supposed to cheat, for example; second, they learn they are judged by the work they do; third (and less obviously), they learn that people should be treated uniformly -- as members of categories, not as special cases; last, they learn to treat people (including themselves) as role occupants rather than as whole persons -- schools focus on certain characteristics of the student at the exclusion of others.

In analyzing the school as a socialization setting, Dreeben and Parsons speak from a stance of value-neutrality and objectivity; they claim their functionalist approach avoids making judgments about the quality of society or the nature of schooling. This posture of value-neutrality stands in sharp contrast to several other writers who are also concerned about school and its external context, but whose observations are laced with explicit value judgments.

Jackson, in Life in Classrooms (1968), shows in specific detail how the socialization outcomes described by Parsons and Dreeben are arrived at. If Dreeben talks about what is learned in school, Jackson shows how it is learned.[11] He explores the way schools impose the adult culture on students -- the patterns of authority, the organization of students into groups. He addresses the overall weight of classroom experiences: the "daily grind," the denial, the disruption, and delay, the institutional conformity. For him, the seemingly trivial and mundane aspects of school amount to a massive behavior modification scheme.

If Jackson murmurs about the bleakness of school life, Henry (1963) and Friedenberg (1967) shout out loud their criticisms of American culture and the part played by schools in sustaining that culture:

> Turning to the contemporary school we see it as a place where children are drilled in cultural orientations . . . (S)chools deal with masses of children, and can manage therefore only by reducing them all to a common definition. Since it is in the nature of things that the definition should be determined by the cultural preoccupations, school creates what I have called the essential nightmare.[12]
>
> Today, as always, the school is the instrument through which society acculturates people into consensus before they become old enough to resist it as effectively as they could later.[13]

In Henry's view schools reflect our culture's worst obsessions. Friedenberg laments the increasing homogenization of young people. For him, the public high school inhibits individual expression and creativity, fostering acquiescence in preparation for membership in a mass society. What Dreeben labels "universalism" and "specificity," Friedenberg would call assaults on human dignity and individuality.

All of the above writers make connections between life in school and its external context. Two of them adopt a posture of value neutrality; the others voice serious criticisms of the socialization process itself and of the society that supports it. But despite contrasting positions on value questions, all five of these writers stop short of prescribing a set of alternative purposes or programs. None suggests that things could really be much different than they are.

The Internal Context.[14] In some senses the school is a world of its own, insulated from its surroundings. A number of researchers describe school as a miniature society with its own power structure, sub-groups, and culture. Yet the first thing to say about the school's internal context is that it reflects the social structure that surrounds it.

The classic work expressing this point of view is Hollingshead's Elmtown's Youth (1949). Hollingshead defined one school's pattern of cliques in terms of the local social class system, arguing that the

> social behavior of adolescents appears to be related functionally to the positions their families occupy in the social structure of the community.[15]

In this study the teachers and students defined their community as essentially "classless," yet their school behavior clearly honored distinctions between different social groups.

Waller (1932), too, deals with the relationship between school life and the outside world. He stands out as someone who anticipated much of the current work on socialization in schools. He analyzes the school's internal context as a "despotism in perilous equilibrium"[16] -- an institution besieged by conflict and competing factions. Like more recent authors, Waller examines the way power and prestige are distributed among students, paying special attention to the conflict of interests between students and teachers:

> Teacher and pupil confront each other in the school with an original conflict of desires, and however much that conflict may be hidden it still remains . . . . The teacher represents the formal curriculum, and his interest is in imposing that curriculum upon the children in the form of tasks; pupils are much more interested in life in their own world than in the dessicated bits of adult life which teachers have to offer.[17]

Coleman (1961) and Gordon (1957) may be seen as more recent attempts to validate Waller's analysis empirically. In The Social System of the High School, Gordon uses a variety of sociometric measures, analyzing the friendship choices of students in terms of their relationship to scholastic performance, extracurricular performance, and other variables. He charted a map of one high school's social network, finding that students did not award popularity and influence to their peers on the same basis as their teachers did.

Like Gordon, Coleman describes school in terms of the tension between peer group interests and adult interests. In The Adolescent Society, he describes two conflicting value systems: for teachers, achievement was the main criterion for rewarding students; among the students themselves, athletic performance was the crucial avenue to power and prestige. Coleman, writing about the mid-fifties, expressed alarm at the discrepancy between the adult and adolescent "societies."

Turner (1964) takes this analysis one step further by looking at the way students cope with these conflicting demands (teacher influence vs. peer group influence). His work, The Social Context of Ambition, grows out of the sociometric tradition [18] and Centers' reformulation of the concept of social class.[19] Turner found that students formed friendship groups with people who held occupational aspirations similar to their own; mobility orientation was the key variable. As a way of coping with the press to achieve and the press to "be a good guy" among peers, students took on the social characteristics associated with their social class destination and chose friends with the same future status prospects.

All of the above writers concentrate on the structure of peer groups in schools and their relationship to the adult culture. They make the point that beyond the school's formal organization there exists a social system that operates on principles that conflict with the public ethic of achievement and work.

In sum, we have reviewed two different sociological perspectives on education. The first examines the socialization function of schools; the second explores the social system within the institution itself. Common to both perspectives is their descriptive rather than prescriptive orientation.

They analyze certain features of school life -- some of them anomalous, paradoxical, and unjust, but refrain from dipping their toes in the waters of intervention and policy. For all of these writers, school-as-an-institutional-context provides a frame of reference for analysis, not a potential arena for action.

Context as a Dimension of Reform

Many educators, impatient with the way innovations in materials and methods can be overwhelmed by institutional inertia, begin where sociological researchers leave off. They seek to alter the socialization patterns of the conventional school through transformation of the school's institutional context. Instead of changing classrooms, these educators focus on the larger learning environment. Although the "alternative school movement" is scattered and heterogeneous, its common theme is the emphasis on context as the crucial dimension of educational reform.

In terms of the framework of this study, many alternative schools strive to change the institutional demands of conventional schools. In particular we can point to three salient elements of conventional schooling that are prime targets for change: hierarchy, formality, and achievement. These terms draw on the recent work of Dreeben and Jackson; they also echo Max Weber's classic description of bureaucratic organization.[20]

First, students in conventional schools learn to come to grips with a school's hierarchy. Power is distributed unequally; teachers dispense praise and punishment; teachers enforce the rules. Teachers assign tasks for students to perform. If we consider an alternative school's response to hierarchy, we can find efforts to include students in the major decision-making processes and experiments in creating a more egalitarian political process.

Second, conventional schools are characterized by formal procedures. Students are expected to follow certain rules, be in certain places at certain times; they are treated as role occupants not as individuals (universalism and specificity, in Dreeben's vocabulary). Alternative schools often try to abolish a school's formality by such practices as calling teachers by their first names, having classes that meet on an *ad hoc* basis, rather than according to a schedule, or by including a number of recreational activities as part of their daily non-routine.

Third, the system of evaluation in conventional schools is, to some extent, based on performing certain tasks with proficiency. There is an achievement press. The general domain of those tasks consists of subject matter areas -- learning certain things about English, math, social studies, science, foreign language and so forth. The demand is that students achieve in these areas according to certain criteria.

Alternative schools frequently modify the role of subject matter or expertise, either by modifying grading procedures (no grades or anecdotal comments, for example), and/or by greatly expanding the range of activities offered for credit. Achievements are either muted in the name of cooperation or else avenues to achievement are broadened. Formality and achievement, taken together, constitute the conventional school's "role restriction." The student is considered not as a full, varied individual but as a member of a category, and his performance is evaluated in terms of achievement rather than in terms of some more inclusive set of attributes.

When we speak of reforming the school's institutional context, then, we refer to attempts to modify the conventional school demands of hierarchy, formality, and achievement. One way to define the variation among schools, in fact, is to identify different orchestrations of hierarchy, formality, and achievement.

Dilemmas of Alternative Schools

In their efforts to transform conventional socialization patterns, many alternative school people try to create contexts that are the polar opposites of the bureaucratic model: egalitarian rather than hierarchical authority; informal, personal relationships; low emphasis on academic achievement and competition. To the extent that educational reformers construe these issues as dichotomous choices rather than as spectrums of alternatives, they may well lock themselves into unworkable courses of action. The logic of "freedom" and "community" can be as imprisoning as the logic of "the Great Society."

One basic problem of the alternative school may lie in the scope of change desired. In contrast with the perhaps overly narrow approach of the curriculum reformers and the affective educators, alternative school people may try to do too much -- their reach exceeds their grasp. The problems of designing a new learning environment, running it, persuading others of its worth, and teaching in it involve several full-time jobs. This burden is the theme of Smith and Keith's book, _The Anatomy of Educational Innovation_ (1971), in which the authors point out the limits of choosing the "alternative of grandeur" as a reform strategy.

Yet alternative schools face a more profound problem than the amount of work they assume. Some alternative schools seek to reverse the conventional socialization outcomes of schooling. They reject the legitimacy of preparing students for existing adult roles and find fault with the prevailing values of the society. They deplore the social inequality characterizing the external context of schooling.

In their efforts to change the _outcomes_ of socialization (the school's relation to its external context), the alternative schools have assumed -- too quickly -- that a change in the socialization _process_ (the internal context) produces the desired results. They assume, for example, that by running schools that are egalitarian, informal, and low on achievement press they will produce students who are strong enough to resist the depersonalization of a mass society. They believe that a more humane, pleasant institution for students is both an example of and a force for fundamental social change.

In short, alternative school people, in part, base their efforts on the notion that changing the internal context of schooling inevitably leads to corresponding changes in the external context. This notion underestimates both the pervasive power of the society's economic and political institutions and ignores some of the realities of how individuals change.

It seems reasonably clear, for instance, that changes in school practices can be absorbed by the existing economic order. A school-without-walls may design extensive community activities in the name of social reform, yet the resulting community apprenticeships in hospitals and businesses may only anticipate and confirm the students' future job statuses. Ostensibly egalitarian authority relationships may serve to obscure less visible concentrations of power. De-emphasizing subject matter may also mesh with, rather than work against, conventional socialization patterns. Bernstein observes, in this connection, that

> it is also likely that the weakened classification and relaxed framing of knowledge will encourage more of the pupil to be made public: more of his thoughts, feelings, values. In this way more of the pupil is available for control. As a result, the socialization may be more intrusive, more penetrating.[21]

This general point is made by Parsons, who argues that experimental schools should be seen as variants of rather than alternatives to conventional socialization patterns. Reforming the institutional context of schools may not have substantial impact on the larger society, and alternative school people face the frustration of employing means too weak to achieve their ends.

The second (and related) dilemma deals with the unanticipated problems of trying to change the internal context itself. Teachers in alternative schools may reduce the external constraints of traditional schools only to encounter, quite by surprise, a perplexed, sometimes unwilling, ungrateful student population. Reducing external authority may give some students more choice; but it may paralyze other students who do not expect or want such freedom. It is just this idea that guides Dostoevsky's famous "Grand Inquisitor":

> Instead of taking men's freedom from them, Thou didst make it greater than ever! Didst thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but nothing is a greater cause of suffering.[22]

One particular irony is at stake in the present study. Students enrolled in alternative schools may desire certain individual changes for themselves, but may not expect or desire changes at the institutional level. They may, in fact, see such changes as threats to their own future aspirations. In such a case the student would experience a discrepancy between his own expectations of what school should be like, and the expectations articulated by the teachers in the alternative school. This kind of discrepancy is probably heightened if heavy layers of radical ideology surround the school. Probably the most obvious specific example of this kind of discrepancy revolves around the issue of decision making. Even though some alternative schools have taken great pains to enlist students in the decision making process at the institutional level, some students find such participation a secondary conern:

> Coming from traditional schools, Metro students were very concerned to gain autonomy in the expressive realm [freedom of movement, dress, expression, and association]. Thus, in the areas that students cared most about, there was no need for organized participation in decision-making.[23]

The Metro students' priorities were only tangentially relevant to the staff's central goals of sharing decision making. The teachers' concerns dealt with broad societal issues of justice and democracy; the students' concerns focused on the immediate restrictions of the internal context. Thus, the students involved in alternative schools may not share the value premises that motivated the formation of the alternative school in the first place. Students can embrace immediate freedom yet reject social revolution as a legitimate pursuit. Values cherished at an individual level may seem dubious when institutionalized. Students in alternative schools may, for instance, not like homework themselves but worry when nobody has homework. They may fear they aren't learning anything. As one student interviewed put it, "What can you learn from playing monopoly?"

In sum, alternative schools face two major problems in their efforts to change the institutional context of schooling. First, reforming the internal context may not have significant impact on the larger society; alternative school educators may discover a discrepancy between their espoused goals and the means at their disposal. Second, paradoxes arise within the internal context itself; students and teachers may not share compatible assumptions about what constitutes legitimate learning activities.

The next chapter describes, in part, the way these problems take shape at two particular alternative schools.

Footnotes to Chapter II

[1] For example, look at any of a number of educational magazines -- *Learning*, *Media and Methods*, *Social Education*.

[2] Jerome S. Bruner, *Toward a Theory of Instruction* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1966), p. 32.

[3] Bruner, p. 95.

[4] David A. Page, *Number Lines, Functions and Fundamental Topics* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1964); Edwin Fenton, *The New Social Studies* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

[5] Frederick Mulhauser discusses this problem in his essay review. *Harvard Educational Review*, 41 (August, 1971), 364-374.

[6] As examples of "affective education" see George I. Brown, *Now: The Human Dimension* (mimeo, The Esalen Institute, 1968); Gerald Weinstein and Mario Fantini, *Toward Humanistic Education* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970); Alfred Alschuler (ed.), *New Directions in Psychological Education* (Albany, N. Y.: Educational Opportunities Forum, State Department of Education, 1969). Three books attempting to bridge 'affective' and 'cognitive' education are Richard M. Jones, *Fantasy and Feeling in Education* (New York: New York University, 1968); Terry Borton, *Reach, Touch and Teach* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970); and George I. Brown, *Human Teaching for Human Learning* (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

[7] Jones, p. 3.

[8] Joseph Grannis, *The School as a Model of Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for Research and Development on Educational Differences, 1967), p. 15.

[9] Talcott Parsons, "The School Class as a Social System," in *Socialization and Schools*, *Harvard Educational Review* Reprint #1, 1968, p. 81.

[10] Robert Dreeben, *On What is Learned in School* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1968), p. 27.

[11] I am indebted to Vicky Steinitz for the distinction.

[12] Henry, Culture Against Man (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), pp. 320-321.

[13] Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 170.

[14] A large body of research exists on what happens in classrooms: Flanders, Bellack, and B. O. Smith come to mind as prominent writers in the field. Most of their work analyzes the "instructional moves" of teachers (primarily their words) and correlates patterns of moves with outcome measures like achievement tests. Although it has some methodological implications for the present study, and although it has the virtue of seeing teaching as an interactive process, the literature on classroom research deals with pedagogy, not the institutional context of classrooms, hence should not be included as part of the work on the "hidden curriculum."

[15] August Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1949), p. 9.

[16] Willard Waller, The Sociology of Teaching (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961 [1932]), p. 10.

[17] Waller, p. 195.

[18] See J. L. Moreno, Who Shall Survive? (Washington, D.C.: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Co., 1934); Helen Hall Jennings, Sociometry in Group Relations (2nd edition; Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1959).

[19] Richard Centers,The Psychology of Social Classes (2nd edition; New York: Russell and Russell, 1961 [1949]).

[20] H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 196-244.

[21] Basil Bernstein, quoted in Frank Musgrove, Patterns of Power and Authority in English Education (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1971), p. 6.

[22] Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, trans. Constance Garnett (London: Heinemann, 1965 [1912]), pp. 261-2.

[23] Center for New Schools,"Strengthening Alternative High Schools," Harvard Educational Review, 42 (August 1972), p. 317.

CHAPTER III

THE TWO SCHOOLS

Whitetown sits seven miles outside of a large New England city.[1] Fifty-three thousand people lived there in 1970. According to recent census figures, the median family income is $7538, slightly above average for the region. Almost half the families earn between $6000 and $9000 yearly. Two-thirds of the homes are owner occupied.

These statistics paint a middle-class portrait, but one which conceals a considerable ethnic and socioeconomic diversity: 99.7% white ten years ago, Whitetown includes a large group of Irish- and Italian-Americans, a sizeable number of Protestant Yankees, many Canadians, a growing population of Greeks, and sprinklings of people with Swedish, British, Oriental, Portuguese, and Armenian backgrounds.

We can sharpen the picture by looking at some demographic patterns. If we consider the nearby outer suburbs as the most prestigious destinations of urban exodus, then Whitetown ranks as one step out of the city, a half-way station to affluence. And since World War II, a substantial influx of "white ethnics," largely Catholic, has considerably changed the town's traditional Yankee complexion. For example, before World War II, three-quarters of all Whitetown high school seniors went on to four-year colleges. Today the comparable figure is 37%, although 69% continue their education in some way. Another indicator of the town's changing face is that in 1956 its first public housing project was completed.

One central fact of recent local history, then, is the passing of Whitetown's Protestant Yankee majority and the rise of the "newly-arrived" white- and blue-collar workers who make up the bulk of the middle class.

It seems important to look at this "middle class" in a differentiated way. One observer identifies two different groups that "average out" to be middle class:

> Today, after its last major expansion, [Whitetown] . . . is left with two major classes. Both have a number of subdivisions, and, as we shall see, are by no means monolithic blocs; but they exist nonetheless. The upper middle class consists of the remainder of the old majority -- largely Republican and Protestant -- that has not moved on; the newer wealthy that own many of the most expensive homes, largely Catholic and Democrat -- many from poorer [local] origins; and the younger professional class that resembles the upper middle class in education, mobility, and often attitudes, if not in income. The other class is the lower middle class, white collar workers and upper working class blue collar workers.[2]

It would be tempting to make assumptions about prevailing educational attitudes on the basis of this overall description, but such assumptions would fall prey to some overdrawn socioeconomic stereotypes. One purpose of this study, in fact, is to examine the diversity of educational expectations as reflected by the children in two alternative schools and thereby to answer the question: What is there in the community that supports educational innovation, and how does a concern with social mobility cut across that support?

The Context for Innovation

The circumstances surrounding the formation of alternative schools vary from community to community. If we look at the most famous examples of public alternative schools, for example, they seem to be spawned at socioeconomic extremes. In Philadelphia, for instance, where school children are predominantly poor and black, a progressive superintendent was able to dramatize a need for change, thus attracting reform-minded educators and federal funds to the system. Thus Philadelphia supported a number of alternative school programs, including the Parkway program and the Pennsylvania Advancement School.

Newton, Massachusetts, provides a contrasting model. There the school system has a long tradition of educational innovation, fertilized in part by its close ties with nearby universities. In introducing new programs (many of the Bruner-inspired curricula were piloted in Newton schools), teachers and administrators can frequently count on the active support of its liberal, largely professional constituency. Alternative school type programs in Newton include Cluster 900 at Weeks Junior High, and Murray Road, an alternative house in one of the public high schools.

Whitetown stands somewhere between these extremes. It lacks dramatic poverty, a clearly liberal population, and close university ties. Yet, over a three-year period, from 1969 to 1971, the local schools initiated three alternative junior high schools, each housed in separate facilities away from the conventional junior highs. These three "annex schools" have many roots, not the least of which were a group of interested and committed parents, teachers, administrators, and school committee members. But the primary catalytic agent in this process of innovation was not commitment to a set of educational ideas nor even dissatisfaction with existing school policies. The main thing was overcrowded schools.

A school system newsletter describes how the annex schools began, and it is particularly interesting to note the balance between references to a serious objective crisis and references to certain educational ideas:

> What began as an attempt to handle some serious overcrowding in the two junior high schools has developed into a comprehensive plan for reorganizing seventh and eighth grade education. During the winter of 1969-70, a committee . . . met regularly to discuss solutions in the West Junior High School. A consultant with experience in the Parkway Program was hired, and he assisted the group in producing a proposal for a school housed independently and conceived of 'not as the school, but rather a staging ground for its activities,' . . . Since the problem of overcrowding had only been partially alleviated, a committee . . . met throughout 1970-71 to

> consider solutions for the Junior High East.
> A second annex was proposed and was opened in February (1971) . . . Still, the overcrowding problem had not been satisfactorily alleviated, and by May 1971 plans were complete for a third annex, which would be called the Hill Annex and which would draw students from both the junior high schools.[3]

In short a physical need of the school system -- more space -- was converted into an alternative school program that had ideological components as well as pragmatic justification. This same newsletter quoted above also referred to the community as a resource for learning, "restructuring authority relationships," "unstructured time," and "curricular variety." The annex school supporters tried to develop positive purposes out of what began as a response to crisis. The story repeats in miniature the lessons of Middletown in Transition (1937), in which the Lynds study the way a small town gave up its usual ways only when confronted by the large scale crisis of the Depression: crisis breeds change.[4]

Even now, four years after the beginning, the innovative programs walk on precarious ground: a comprehensive new building program is underway, and community controversy over innovative educational practices is moot, for any debate is haunted by a more basic question: What happens to the annex schools when there is enough space in the regular school buildings? Despite ideological rationales, survival of the annex schools remains an open question.

The Annex Schools

Whitetown has three annex junior high schools. Each school has a separate, autonomous faculty of full time teachers in English, social studies, math, and science, plus two half-time teachers in foreign language and art and music. One administrator oversees all three programs. There is also a guidance counselor and program secretary who are clearly instrumental in the administration of the school.

The Principal. In his late twenties, proud of his Irish forebears, the supervising principal of the annex schools took over at a critical time in the history of the programs. With equivocal community support, weak ties to the administration, and flimsy claims to their share of the school budget, the annex program gained sustenance primarily from the continuing overcrowding conditions that generated it in the first place. The previous year the annexes had been run under the auspices of the conventional school principals -- an absentee management system that created some tensions but which, in the main, left the annex teams pretty much to their own devices. From the perspective of some teachers, then, gaining an administrator of their own was a potential threat to their autonomy. By the end of his first year, however, the principal had both gained a parent constituency of his own and earned the respect of most of the annex teachers.

The principal spent much of his time trying to shore up and protect the fragile program, serving as a buffer between the central administration and the teachers. He tended to stay out of curriculum matters, but pushed teachers to tighten up the organization of their schools. He also spent a good portion of his time lobbying for athletic facilities and seeking supplementary people to help with gym, reading, and other activities. Somehow he also refereed basketball and hockey games, went on several field trips, and ran a photography course. More than anything else, perhaps, his presence seemed to ease the annex teachers' sense of isolation and uncertainty with respect to the central administration. He was not, to be sure, without detractors. As one student put it in an interview:

> I can't stand Mr. Sullivan.
> Interviewer: How come?
> Student: Oh, he gets real friendly with you, then he nails you for something.

Selection of Students. A total of 200 students attend the programs. Although the programs are voluntary, a few students arrived as a result of teacher or counselor recommendation. In some instances this recommendation procedure seemed to be a way for the conventional schools to "get rid of discipline problems." At the end of sixth grade each student was given several options for his seventh-grade schooling: the regular school, a special program ("cluster") located within the regular school, the annex school within his home district, or the Hill annex. Although students indicated their preferences, it seems clear that some were steered away from one of the programs, the Lake Annex. As came through again and again in the interviews with Hill students, many students were told that there were "no openings" at "the Lake," although in fact the Lake annex is the most undersubscribed of the three. One school official speculated that the principals of the conventional schools, threatened by the popularity of the alternative schools, tried to undermine the Lake, reputedly the most daring of the three programs.

I conducted my research at two of the three annexes, the Lake and the Hill. I wanted to go beyond the limitations of a case study of a single program, yet, given the intense nature of the study (large numbers of classroom observations and interviews), I wanted to avoid a superficial acquaintance with the schools. After discussions with my administrative contact in Whitetown and preliminary visits of my own, I eliminated the annex that seemed least innovative. The Hill annex, serving both the East and West districts, contained the greatest socioeconomic mix, and I assumed conflict among students might be greatest in that situation. The Lake probably was most "alternative."

The Lake

Next to Whitetown's largest body of water stands the Boys' Club. Inside the club's ground floor, from 8:00 to 2:00 each weekday, the Lake annex is in operation. Four classrooms line one side of the corridor, opposite a long row of student lockers. The corridor opens into a small foyer which, in turn, leads into a large room, serving as a cafeteria, math class, and meeting room. Formerly known as the Smorg Room (short for smorgasbord), the big room has been a gym on rainy days and continues to be a kind of impromptu student lounge (often to the chagrin of the math teacher who holds her classes there). Vending machines -- off limits during classes -- squat in one corner.

Thus far, the building differs only slightly from the layout of most public schools, but three things stand out as special: the kitchen, the lake, and the "upstairs."

The kitchen, adjacent to the big room, plays an important part in school life: teachers and students occasionally cook a pancake breakfast; each Friday a class called "Running a Business" cooks and sells hamburgers for the rest of the students. Every Monday a group, largely eighth grade boys, practices the art of "French Cuisine."

A door from the big room leads to the lake and its bit of park. One ecology-centered class focuses on cleaning up the lake and park, but the lake's main use is recreational: students sit outside, climb trees, float popsicle stick rafts, skip stones, and throw things at pieces of wood, bottles, or (occasionally) ducks. During the spring and fall particularly, students crowd onto the little stretch of sand outside the club.

Upstairs is the Boys' Club recreation room, complete with juke box, knock hockey games, pool and ping pong tables. Students can use this equipment provided that an adult is on hand, and students frequently pester their teachers and even visitors to "Open the upstairs! Please!"

The kitchen, the lake, and the "upstairs" all make certain kinds of activity possible that would be problematic elsewhere. Perhaps more than anything else, these facilities contribute to the annex's informal atmosphere.

The Schedule. After arriving at the Lake, students face a complicated set of choices -- what courses to take. The year is divided into three terms, and each term a catalogue is published announcing the various course offerings. In the fall of 1972 the list included "Electing a President," "Exploring Whitetown," "Meeting a Deadline," "Energy," "Matter," "Science Current Events," "U.S.History," "Playing Bridge," "Math," "Basic English," "Adventure Stories," "Folk Dancing," "Recorder," and others. Courses are classified as math, science, social studies, or English credits. Most courses meet three times a week. Students must arrange their schedules so that they meet the state requirements in each subject; this usually means taking more than one course in each area.

At the beginning of the year students were limited to one free period a day. This represented a "retrenchment" from the previous year, when the number of free periods was unlimited provided that all requirements were met. In practice, however, some students have arranged schedules so that they have large blocs of "unscheduled time," though the teachers are quick to modify this if the student involved presses his luck too far by making a nuisance of himself when he's out of class.

Morning classes begin at 8:00 a.m. The early hour is necessary because the Boys' Club must be vacated by 2:00 p.m. to make way for other activities. After two forty-minute classes students have a ten minute break which, in practice, sometimes stretches to twenty. During break most students congregate in the big room, use the vending machines, and run around, sometimes darting outside or playing basketball on the outdoor court. Two teachers sell fruit and milk to students; this is a gesture in opposition to the candy and soda available in the machines.

Classes resume and continue until lunch, which lasts from 11:30 to 12:00. There are two more periods after lunch, and the day ends with a ten-minute community meeting, during which the teachers stand in the center of the big room and the students perch at various points on the room's perimeter. The teachers make announcements about the next day's events, call attention to any serious mishaps of the day just completed, and, when necessary, ask to "see" certain students after school. This pattern repeated itself daily (except for Wednesday, when there is a half day).

Around Thanksgiving, the teachers decided to try out a new schedule, just for the time before Christmas. This schedule was also a "block" schedule -- that is, classes met every day at the same time, but with a difference: each day of the week one teacher led an all-day field trip; there were five field trips every week, and the student could choose one each week. This new schedule did not allow for free time, and in this sense "tightened up," but this was offset by the considerably wider leeway given to students in terms of their classroom attendance. After Christmas, the former type of schedule was reinstated.

The Hill

Excited at the prospect of visiting another alternative school, I was disappointed by my first glimpse of the Hill annex: it looked like a regular school. The Boys' Club at the Lake, of course, looked like a school, too -- its hallway, its tile floors, pallid colors, and cinder block walls. But the Hill building was a four-story, high ceiling, brick, turn-of-the-century monstrosity without a nearby pond. It not only looked like a school, it looked like a *big* school and an *old* school.

The building had been the "junior high industrial arts school" in an earlier incarnation; it now housed, in addition to the annex students, two experimental "open" classrooms for fifth and sixth graders, a special education program, a classroom for emotionally disturbed students, and the offices of several school administrators (The Director of Pupil Personnel Services was most prominent among these. Never quite accustomed to the presence of children near his office, he occasionally yelled at bewildered students, telling them to "get back where they belonged.").

The fact that the facilities were shared by other groups gave the Hill a cosmopolitan flavor, in contrast with the splendid isolation and intimacy of the Lake. This cosmopolitanism also derived from the Hill's closer proximity to the center of town and the fact that Hill students came from all parts of town, not just one district.

Despite the Hill's "schooly" appearance, my first observations there noted some salient differences from a conventional public school: there were only eighteen students in the room; the class contained both seventh and eighth graders; students sat wherever they wanted and moved their chairs around; there was little effort to control peripheral noise. I also found some obvious similarities with more conventional schools: as with "first days" at other places, students spent much time filling out information and schedule cards -- the tasks seemed routine and boring. The teachers' main activity was giving directions. The students' seating pattern revealed that they had, for the most part, segregated themselves by grade and sex.

The Schedule. In its first year, 1971-72, the Hill had four main teachers and fifty-seven students -- a ratio of 1:14 (not including special subject teachers). This permitted a good deal of scheduling flexibility, and instead of a conventional block schedule the teachers instituted a "tag" system: each period a student would decide what class or activity to attend; he then indicated his choice by placing a tag with his name on the proper hook. A sign-in procedure checked that students had had enough of each subject.

In 1972-73, eighty-seven students went to the Hill -- an increase of over 50% with no additional staff. The situation is inevitably more cumbersome, and the four teachers devote much time and energy to coping with scheduling problems. The tag system was replaced with a block schedule, quite similar to the Lake's. Following an orientation period, students selected courses from a catelogue: Meteorology, Public Speaking, Cowboys and Indians, Basic English, Discovery Math, Cardboard Carpentry, Botany, Creative Writing, In-Group/Out-group, Genetics. At the beginning of the school year most students had one or two free periods a day. "Community minutes" occurred in the middle of each morning: attendance was taken and announcements were made.

After two months the teachers agreed that some students "abused the privilege" of free time. Moreover the logistics of the schedule seemed awkward. Most importantly, a gym had become available, but only between 8:00 and 9:30 a.m. A new schedule was introduced at about the same time the Lake revised its schedule. In many respects, the Hill schedule represented a clear retrenchment: students had fewer choices -- for example, the specialized science courses were collapsed into one broad "science" course; free periods were no longer considered a universal opportunity -- instead they were a matter of negotiation between a student and his advisor. On the other hand, a more tightly organized schedule seemed to permit more field trips.

What is "Alternative" about the Annex Schools?

Both the Hill and the Lake represent attempts to change the internal context of schooling. We can get a clearer sense of the scope of those changes by considering the two schools in light of the three aspects of institutional structure discussed in the previous chapter: hierarchy, formality, and achievement. By describing the two annexes in this manner we can estimate the "degree of difference" between the programs and the conventional school's role demands.

Hierarchy. There is no question at either annex about who has primary responsibility and authority for what goes on: it is the teachers. At some alternative schools a more egalitarian set-up might exist; in making comparisons, however, it is important to remember that the annexes are dealing with a young age group -- the students are twelve and thirteen years old, not high school students on the verge of voting, drinking, marriage, or the armed forces.

At the annexes the teachers retain and use most of the traditional powers of their role: they sometimes discipline students -- either through reprimands, keeping them after school, calling a parent, or (rarely) referring the student to the principal if suspension is called for. The usual array of sanctions is at hand.

In addition, it is the teacher who 'dispenses freedom,' by giving or taking away free periods, for example, or by granting or refusing specific requests to do something or go someplace. The teacher approves a student's course selection and rules on requests for schedule changes. In short, the teachers govern student behavior: they establish what the school demands of its students.

Thus far, the hierarchical structure of the annex schools appears to differ only fractionally from what we might expect at a conventional school. But the picture shifts somewhat if we remember one of Dreeben's observations:

> Punishment, then, even if severe, means one thing if administered in the context of a sustained relationship of affection and another where such feeling is absent.[5]

The hierarchical aspects of the annexes take on a different shading insofar as the arrangements of formality and achievement make "a relationship of sustained affection" possible.

Formality. Conventional schools are organized on the basis of explicit procedures. Duties are clear; the student-teacher relationship consists of somewhat circumscribed roles. Failure to comply with regulations results in punishment. The emphasis is on the consistency and universal applicability of standards rather than on tailoring actions to meet situational nuances.

At both annexes we find more emphasis on personalization. There are, to be sure, rules regarding such matters as smoking, attendance, and other formal procedures surrounding those points of contact with the external legal structure (e.g., fire laws, compulsory attendance). But in other matters, there is considerable informality in the way things are handled. Situations take precedence over procedures. As one Lake teacher put it:

> I think that when a child is out of line that rather than come on with the traditional type of punishment such as keeping him after school or sending him to the principal's office, we're more apt to sit down and try to reason with the child, and try to explain that his behavior or her behavior is not acceptable in the community. Uh, and try to reason with the child rather than just invoke a punishment.

At both annexes there is a fluidity about scheduling matters, disciplinary problems, and other "administrative" aspects of school.

Most of the teachers at both schools prefer to be called by their first names. There is not a good deal of ceremony at the schools. The daily routine is itself informal: with no bells there is a flexibility about when classes begin and end, for example. On a larger scale, it is not infrequent for the day's schedule to be suspended in favor of a field trip or some other activity (a trip to the beach, a skating excursion).

If the two annexes have created more personalized school settings, they nevertheless stop short of placing heavy emphasis on personal introspection. In this sense they differ from some other alternative programs where teachers have tried to build in explicit channels for interpersonal communication, self-disclosure, or resolving intergroup conflicts. The chief illustrations come from the fairly popular practice of establishing "home groups" or "family groups" -- regularly scheduled small, heterogeneous groups of students that meet for the purpose of discussing school problems, getting along better with each other, and so forth.

The Lake and the Hill have few analogues to this type of activity. One Lake teacher, who left at the end of the 1972 school year, did have a strong interest in drama. He ran several courses involving dramatic improvisation and human relations. A reasonably large number of students, mostly girls, loyally supported him and enrolled in almost all his courses. This year at the Lake there is one course in "Group Dynamics" and at the Hill there are two courses in communications. Interestingly enough, these courses are all taught by outside volunteers, and all began the second term -- suggesting that courses focusing explicitly on "expressing feelings" are not among the regular teachers' priorities.

The point is underscored by the nature of "Community Meetings" at each school. At each annex the whole school meets together for a few minutes. The name suggests that this time is set aside for the school community to spend time together as a community, rather than being split up into various classroom groupings. But at both schools this brief time serves primarily an administrative function, analogous to homeroom period in many schools. If, in fact, there were a public address system at either school, the time would not be necessary. The talking at these meetings is almost always one-way: the teachers announce things to the students; the students sit on the edge of the rooms, the teachers in the centers; the teachers call for quiet, the teachers dismiss the group at the end. Whatever intentions guide these meetings, in practice they are oriented toward procedural matters.

We need not conclude from this discussion that the two annex schools are in some way deficient -- only that they do not treat the issue of personalization in the same way as do some other alternative schools.

Moreover, it seems likely that the introspective kind of personalization is appropriate only to certain types of students. Some students may value dealing with conflict through verbalizing feelings; other students may prefer other resolutions. As Goldenberg (1971) writes, only a limited segment of students shares the assumptions underlying a "sustained talking cure."[6] A heavy dose of introspection seems more expressive of a particular life style than symptomatic of open communications between people. At the very least we can say that there are several possible routes to personalizing the school environment and facilitating fuller interpersonal communication: the two annexes do not provide many formal settings for interpersonal communication; they do not press for that kind of activity; it does not follow that students and teachers cannot express their feelings.

In sum, the two annexes mute the formality of conventional schools. The settings are personal in many ways, but not in the sensitivity group tradition that characterizes other alternative programs.

The Concept of Community. In a conventional school hierarchical authority and formal procedures go hand in hand; the two attributes mesh with each other and in some instances seem indistinguishable.

At the two annexes, however, the two dimensions act independently. The hierarchy persists but within an atmosphere of informality. Sanctions are imposed within a general context of affection; classrooms are often noisy and freewheeling, but the teacher sets the limits he or she finds appropriate.

In this respect the two annexes differ from other alternative schools. Many alternative programs, based as they are on a rejection of conventional school practices, assume an inescapable fusion between hierarchy and formality. Often they define "community" as their goal and characterize community as being egalitarian (non-hierarchical) and informal. The impetus toward shared decision-making is most symptomatic of this tendency to confuse hierarchy and formality. In the effort to create a community of mutual respect, many alternative school teachers have tried to surrender their traditional hierarchical authority, by divesting themselves of the power to evaluate work, discipline students, enforce attendance, and so forth.

If we look at conventional and alternative schools in terms of Tonnies' (1936) classic distinction between 'society' (Gesellschaft)and 'community' (Gemeinschaft), we see even more clearly that there is no internal contradiction between hierarchy and informality. Tonnies contrasted the specialized, contractual basis of 'society' with the familial face-to-face relationships of a 'community,' he did not make a similar contrast in terms of hierarchy -- that is, the classic definition of community does not include completely egalitarian relationships. The distinction turns primarily on the degree of personalization, not on the degree of democracy.

Thus, if we evaluate the two annexes in terms of the extent to which the programs lack hierarchical relationships we only fall prey to some of the same erroneous assumptions that have paralyzed some alternative schools. It seems clear that some sort of stratification occurs, some differential allocation of power and prestige, in any social group.[7]

Achievement. We can examine the two annex schools in light of three components of achievement press -- 1) the nature of the subject matter that provides the raw material for achievement, 2) the range of learning contexts, and 3) the evaluative procedures that provide incentive to achieve.

1. In conventional schools the bulk of student activity consists of performing verbal exercises of one sort or another. At the annexes, clear and distinct efforts were made to diversify classroom content. The Lake gives credit for courses in cooking, working on the school newspaper, helping to clean up the nearby park, and so forth. The Hill offers courses in woodcarving, bowling, and ventriloquism. The availability of unusual content -- and especially content that did not immediately require literacy skills reduces the academic press on students. Further, the local junior high school imposed uniform schedules with uniform curricula on all students in a particular grade. At the annexes students selected their own courses, hence had some control over how much pressure to achieve they would encounter. One teacher illustrates the point in her interview:

> I try to set up the schedule to appeal to various types of kids. Like Adventure Stories is clearly the gut course of English. I rationalize it saying that at least the kids are doing things in there ... All we do is read stories in there. It's just attracted almost all the boys in the school.

2. Not only do the Annex schools diffuse the press to achieve through unusual content, they also make use of a variety of "non-academic" contexts. The most salient example is the large number of field trips. At least once

a week, on the average, one or more teachers at each school journey out into the larger community, visiting museums, going to a movie, traveling to an historic site. Field trips are an important part of each school's identity. Some have academic overtones, others are purely recreational. These field trips are essentially guided tours into the outside world, consisting of classroom-sized groups of students and a single teacher. The Lake took excursions to a science museum, various historical sites of the American Revolution, and to other alternative schools in the area. The Hill ran trips to a weather station, and various ethnic neighborhoods in a nearby city. The annex field trips are far more extensive than any similar ventures at most conventional schools.

Other alternative schools have also stressed using the outside community. Metro School in Chicago, for example, runs a wide variety of community apprenticeships, community-taught courses, and so forth. Such activities appeal to many students bored by traditional instruction and/or who find them easier.

We can better understand the relationship between learning contexts and achievements, if we distinguish between variety of contexts and diverse modes of learning. The annex schools offer more opportunities to move around and go places, and these opportunities de-emphasize cognitive and verbal facility. But in some ways they have varied the contexts within a single mode of learning. The student on a field trip is often one member of a large group supervised by a teacher; he is still basically a recipient of information. although that information is received directly instead of vicariously. To the extent that the annex schools structure their community experiences in terms of a guided tour, they have not opened the school doors to different modes of learning; they have simply extended the role relationships of the classroom to new settings.

We can conceive of other ways to use the community: within certain boundaries students could travel singly, or in twos and threes. Instead of going to see different things, students might enjoy and profit from doing things -- doing precinct work during a campaign, volunteering at a hospital, visiting the elderly, helping out at a gas station or store. The grouping and the kind of activity could vary.

Community experiences could also be sequential, rather than the "one-shot deals" that field trips usually are. Community projects or apprenticeships could operate on a sustained basis -- a week of no classes in order to make a movie at the zoo; a twice-weekly stint as a candystriper.

The two annex schools have made a few gestures in the direction of varying their community activities, but even these gestures seem somewhat tentative: a few students tutor elementary school children in math, an occasional research project involving the downtown library. The teachers at the Lake and Hill have made extensive efforts at planning, organizing, and running field trips, but that energy focuses on this one type of activity, rather than introducing different modes of learning.[8] The main point is that introducing a variety of contexts may reduce the achievement press, but it does not necessarily create active learners.

3. The structure of evaluation at the two annexes also tends to reduce the academic press experienced by students. Although some teachers do give letter grades, most of the teachers ask students to participate somehow in their own evaluation and the form of evaluation is written anecdotal reports. There is not the immediate comparability of letter grades that presumably heightens competition. One boy at the Hill -- highly competitive and academically oriented -- disliked the evaluation system for this reason:

> Turner: If they were marking you on a regular report card, you might get an A or a B or something like that. But when they give you evaluations it might be the same thing, only they write out, "So and So could do much better." Like that's happened to me. On a report card you might get an A, but on an evaluation it might seem you weren't doing well at all . . . they kinda give you a different feeling than if it was a regular report card.

In sum, the diverse content, the range of learning contexts, and a less competitive evaluation system all help reduce the external pressure to achieve that characterizes conventional schools.

Conclusions

Taking our three categories together, we can draw a contrast between the conventional school system and the two annex schools. This contrast is summarized, perhaps overdrawn, in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

The Conventional School and the Annexes, Contrasted

(Aspect)	Conventional School	Annex Schools
1. (Authority)	hierarchy	hierarchy
2. (Structure)	formal procedures; role orientation	fluid, informal procedures; personalization
3. (Learning Activities)	achievement press; uniform subject matter, letter grade evaluation.	lower achievement press; unusual content, varied contexts, anecdotal evaluation

At the same time as I have described the differences between a conventional school setting and the annex schools, I have indicated that the annexes differ from other alternative schools. Unlike alternative schools that describe their activities in terms of a social change ideology, for example, the two annex schools do not automatically push to overturn all the conventional socialization patterns. In many respects the annexes seem poised between a conventional approach to schooling and the utopian approach articulated by some educational reformers. This "middle" position is illustrated by the way the two annex schools deal with the question of choice. I see choice as a kind of global construct that cuts across all the categories just discussed. The point here is that the opportunities for choice at the two annexes represent a middle ground between having no choice and having to make all the important choices concerning one's education.

Choice. Both annexes offer students certain choices -- what courses to take, what field trips to go on, what to do and how to behave during free time.

If we compare the annex choice opportunities with those existing in conventional schools, the change seems remarkable. Instead of receiving a computer printed schedule in the mail, annex students get a course catalogue and choose among alternatives. Students at the conventional junior high have no free periods; they must attend study halls. The conventional school essentially casts its students as "patients" who receive treatment. At the Lake and the Hill students have more of a chance to act as agents on their own behalf.

Yet, in other respects, the arrangements at the Lake and the Hill seem rather circumscribed. A number of realities impinge on the choice opportunities.

We can, for example, distinguish between a choice and a decision.[9] In this terminology, a choice is simply a selection among a predetermined set of options, as in the answers in a multiple-choice exam. A decision, on the other hand, implies creating options, translating purpose into action. When the Lake and the Hill students make out their schedules, they are making choices, not decisions. A decision would entail deciding whether or not to take courses at all. Sudbury Valley School in Massachusetts established decision opportunities; there no formal classes took place unless initiated by students. (This sort of situation rarely occurs in public alternative schools, however.)

To decide means to initiate: choosing among fixed alternatives takes more initiative than not choosing, but it is essentially a responding role; the student responds to the options presented without having to consider what would happen without any externally defined choices. Presumably for some students the externally defined choices expand the range of possibilities; for others that range is contracted. But whatever the individual's internal sense of possibilities, he has, at the annex schools, no formal way of going beyond the structured limits. He has choices to consider that would not be available at the conventional school, but those choices are determined by state requirements, the time available, the boundaries of the teachers' thinking, and so forth.

In terms of an alternative school, then, building in choice opportunities may well give students a sense of increased control over their time; it does not mean that students have taken active responsibility and initiative in shaping their own education.

A second aspect of the choice opportunities at the annexes involves the distinction between initial and continuing choice. An annex student may have the chance to choose course A or course B, but once enrolled he may find it difficult to change his mind. In practice, the students sometimes do appeal to their advisors and change their schedule, but there is no formal way to consider the course offerings; there is nothing comparable to a college week of "shopping around." In this respect, annex students must make their choices in a vacuum. Having made out their schedule, they are, for most practical purposes, stuck. Skipping class is, of course, one accommodation to the situation -- indicating that students do make continuing choices: whether or not to attend each class. The point here is that choice may be more an opening ritual at the beginning of each term than an ongoing process in which situations are reappraised. The question posed by this analysis is explored through the student interviews -- to what extent do students perceive the choices at the annex schools as significantly greater than what they are used to, and to what extent do those choices seem false or illusory?

Defining Alternative Patterns of Socialization. This chapter has described the internal context of the Hill and the Lake, explaining some of the differences and similarities between these particular alternative programs and more conventional settings.

In some ways the annex schools represent variants of conventional socialization patterns: hierarchical authority persists; the press to achieve is lessened -- recreational and instructional settings are blurred together, but present nevertheless; only the formality of conventional schools seems substantially changed. There is little to suggest that the annex schools have developed an institution that is dysfunctional for the larger society. Despite their smaller size and more personal orientation, we find a different orchestration of hierarchy, formality, and achievement -- not an antithesis to conventional institutional arrangements.

The realities of the Hill and the Lake suggest that a simple reversal of conventional school arrangements is more a fantasied set of ideals than a viable prescription for educational policy. In an ideal alternative school we can envision relationships that are both egalitarian and informal; in real settings, like the annexes, there is always some stratification, and external realities make some formal procedures necessary. In an ideal alternative setting, some people would strive for open communication marked by verbalizing about feelings; in real situations, ways of communication and personal styles are varied, and not necessarily introspective. In an ideal school, perhaps people would take complete responsibility for their own learning. In reality, people resist making choices and external circumstances limit the kinds of decisions possible.

All this does not mean that ideals are an inappropriate frame of reference for educational reformers or alternative schools. Pacifism, for example, represents a powerful ideal that may not be generalizeable. The point here is that such ideals are abstractions; they only gain substance and take on policy implications as they emerge in concrete situations. In particular contexts we find it necessary to make tradeoffs between competing values and purposes; our ideals are not all harmonious.

In the effort to develop and organize institutions oriented toward fostering personal efficacy and a sense of fate control -- in my view prerequisites for the capacity to tolerate and generate social change -- educators would do well to avoid thinking in terms of a dichotomy between conventional and "alternative" values. In the two schools described, we can observe the complexity of organizing any institution and especially the paradoxes of organizing a school based on unconventional ideas. The external social context is reflected in the alternative school as well as the conventional school; we find a mixture of conventional and alternative practices and ideas. This suggests that in defining alternative models of socialization we cannot operate in a vacuum. We should not evaluate a new institution independently of the people involved in the enterprise and the community and society in which the institution is located. The ideals we strive for are, in this sense, context bound; alternative patterns of socialization must make sense in terms of the actual individuals and situational constraints at hand.

In the next chapter I explore the relationships between the teachers' abstract ideals and actual practice. In examining their educational rationales I analyze the extent to which these teachers operate in terms of either conventional or alternative ideals. How do they conceptualize the school's relationship with its external context? Are they oriented toward an ethic of social reform? How do institutional realities impinge on their ideals? Are they aware of conflicts between ideals and practice? In answering these questions I illustrate some of the problems common to many alternative schools and at the same time consider what is unique about these particular programs. It is in exploring the teachers' ideas that we find the strongest clues about the espoused purposes of the Hill and the Lake.

D

Footnotes to Chapter III

[1] All names of people and places have been disguised.

[2] Keith Shahan, Confidential Report on the School System (unpublished), p. 13.

[3] Local school system newsletter, 1972.

[4] Robert S. Lynd and Helen Lynd, Middletown in Transition (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1937).

[5] Robert Dreeben, On What is Learned in School (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1968), p. 34.

[6] Ira I. Goldenberg, Build Me a Mountain (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1971), pp. 76-81.

[7] Muzafer Sherif, Reference Groups (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

[8] We can make the same point, if we consider the outside people who teach mini-courses. They too are engaged in didactic teaching: they are new faces but, for the most part, they do the same sorts of things that most teachers do -- talk, ask questions, listen. The outside people present new subject matter, new ideas and their very presence introduces variety into the two schools. But their work does not mean that the classroom as a setting has changed very much. As one group of alternative school people wrote, using outside resources may result in "exchanging dull professionals for dull amateurs."

[9] Edward C. Banfield, Political Influence (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1961).

CHAPTER IV

THE TEACHERS' IDEOLOGIES

Schools, as compulsory public monopolies, have an inertia all their own; we tend to take their existence for granted from year to year. One way educational innovators try to overcome that inertia is by articulating rationales for change. Such rationales, they hope, create a public momentum for school reform.

As with Whitetown and its overcrowding problems, pragmatic considerations probably play a decisive role in any school reforms: budgeting, the political situation, and the legal structure all affect the chances for starting new educational programs, but the rationales behind proposals also help persuade school boards, administrators, parents, and funding agencies that educational innovation is desirable. Such rationales serve the purpose of legitimizing and providing incentive for institutional change. This chapter explores the rationales -- or non-rationales -- put forth by the teachers at the Hill and the Lake.

Ideology and Utopia

Karl Mannheim distinguishes between "ideologies" and "utopias."[1] An "ideology," in his terms, explains the existing order of things; it justifies the institution as it presently functions. A "utopia," on the other hand, envisions an alternative way of doing things -- it calls for the transformation of the existing order. An ideology props up the "is"; a utopia looks toward the "ought."

If we consider this distinction in terms of alternative schools, it becomes clear that school "ideologies" are, for the most part, implicit, while school "utopias" are much more explicit. Because the school system is taken for granted, schools require few rationales except when under attack. The "utopias" of alternative schools, however, carry the burden of proof; they must specify why and how a change should take place. Aside from classics of the traditional school (Conant or Rickover, for example) we see few apologies for the school system, but we do find many exhortations for change -- proponents of the Open Classroom, Illich, Leonard, Weinstein and Fantini. The utopias outnumber (but don't outweigh) the ideologies.

In addition, people are largely in agreement over many parts of the conventional school's ideology even in its silence. For example, all but three or four of the students interviewed in this study began the interview this way:

> Interviewer: What would you say is the main point
> of going to school?
> Student: To learn!
> I: Why is it important to learn?
> S: To get [illegible] job.

For many people, the goals and consequences of schooling are clear, and there is substantial consensus about those goals and consequences. But if we look at school utopias we find, aside from massive and unanimous rejection of the conventional schools, conflict over the means and ends of school reform. For example, when the annex students were asked, "What's the main point of a special school like this?" they responded variously -- some stressing the program's pragmatic origins, others mentioning freedom, some seeing it as a short term experiment.

Against this backdrop of implicit but monolithic conventional ideology and explicit but heterogeneous utopias of school and social reform I wanted to see where the annex teachers fit in: What were their ideas and assumptions about the purpose of alternative schools? How did they view some of the usual alternative school policies -- decision-making, community activities, and the like? The general question guiding my inquiry was, "To what extent do these teachers think in utopian, as opposed to ideological terms?"

At the two annex schools some teachers were more conventional in their orientation; they tended to have, so far as the interviews revealed, implicit ideologies. Other teachers leaned more in the utopian direction, defining their work in terms of social ideals.[2] The task of this chapter is to explain the variation in ideological and utopian orientations within each annex and the variation between the two schools. For convenience I will use the term ideology in its broader, more colloquial sense, referring not to a particular value orientation but to a general set of ideas.

It should be remembered that the two annexes are quite similar to each other, perched somewhere in the middle of a wide spectrum that ranges from conventional schools to utopian experiments. Relative to the conventional schools, the annexes have worked hard to define new ways of doing things; relative to some university-based school projects, the role played by utopian ideals is quite minor. This chapter explores the salience of educational ideals and the way in which situational constraints force pragmatic adjustment of those ideals.

To explore the teachers' ideological (again, using the word in its general sense) orientations I interviewed the four main subject matter teachers at each school. As the study continued it became clear that in some respects this choice eliminated some important people at the annexes. I did not, for example, interview the art teachers or the language teacher shared by both annexes. I also left out the guidance counselor and the annex secretary, both of whom could have contributed important views on the two schools. I also did not talk formally to the student teachers and mini-course volunteers. All these people would have added unique perspectives to the study. In retrospect I find my exclusion of them gives unwitting emphasis to the place of subject matter at each annex.

My selection of the four main teachers at each school was justifiable on other grounds, however. The four main teachers were the only full-time adults at each setting. In effect they made school policy; it seemed especially important to focus on their assumptions. I interviewed each of them for periods ranging from forty-five minutes to over two hours. I covered a formal interview schedule and also conversed informally with them, sharing some of my preliminary conclusions with them. I conducted these interviews only after the field observations and student interviews were complete in order to avoid biasing observations in the direction of teachers' perceptions.

In addition, I shared with the teachers an earlier draft of this and the following chapter, then met with each faculty as a group. These meetings not only seemed part of my responsibility to the schools; they also helped clarify my ideas and refine my data.

I have revised this chapter on the basis of teacher feedback. The annex teachers' comments focused largely on the question of value judgments surrounding the observations, interviews and the text. In particular they felt I had caricatured the more conservative faculty members in a disparaging way. Others felt I had underestimated their awareness of and interest in larger social movements and reform ideology. I have tried to balance what I say, honoring teachers' comments to the extent that they were consonant with my own judgment. The general effect of these comments was a retreat on my part from all encompassing labels and an increased reliance on a straightforward presentation of what teachers said and did. The responsibility for my observations rests with me alone.

One caution: in the previous chapter I discussed the Lake school first, then turned to the Hill. At this point, for the rest of the paper, I reverse that order. I will describe the Hill teachers first, then the Lake teachers.

The Role of the Principal

The principal, as mentioned before, served as a buffer between the school system administration and the annex schools. He protected the teachers' autonomy, yet he also pushed them toward ideological clarification of goals, not at an abstract level but in the sense of making and executing practical decisions about school organization. For example, he raised many questions about the practicality of offering students free time. He attended meetings and was involved in many decisions regarding curriculum matters and school policy.

In addition he was an important link to school reforms in other places. He knew a lot about other alternative schools and arranged exchanges with some of them. He brought in outside people who were interested in alternative schools as part of a broader effort, not just as idiosyncratic examples of good schools. He received and distributed information about other alternative schools and sought to include the annex schools in relevant newsletters and directories.

Educational Ideology at the Hill

Relative to teachers at most other schools, the four Hill teachers were young and inexperienced. All had had some teaching experience -- three out of the four in the local school system, but they were new to the task of running an alternative school. All of them expended great energy at their jobs and expressed commitment to making the school a good one. Each emphasized the fulfillment and excitement of working with adolescents.

Frances often tired in her efforts to create an open math curriculum; she worked hard and intensely as she struggled to make her subject interesting for the students. She described herself as

> a lot looser [than the other teachers here], and I allow the kids a lot more freedom to fool around and I don't hold them accountable for their misdemeanors, and I don't see that as really a good thing. But yet on the other hand I don't know . . . .

Leila taught social studies and came to the Hill faculty in September, 1972 Outspoken, she was concerned with the organization of the school as a whole:

> I'm just as interested in the whole school thing as I am in social studies -- or more interested, actually. And so the chance to sort of build something was very exciting.

Walt, the youngest and only male faculty member, taught the English courses and saw himself moving away from conventional teaching to more innovative practices:

> I didn't know whether I would be able to be effective in (an alternative school), I didn't know . . . Of the four main teachers I would still say I'm the most conservative, because I am the most teacher-oriented . . . I'm constantly working at breaking that down, so it'll be more and more the students' world.

Susan, the science teacher, was the only teacher not called by her first name. She took responsibility as chief "attendance officer" of the school, but disclaimed her informal title among students (and teachers) as "the strictest." She worked quite hard at many administrative aspects of the school (scheduling, for example).

> I was pleased when I found out I could get to come here, because I was feeling unhappy at both the junior highs where I was before . . . As it turns out now, there are still some things I'd like to see changed -- I think it's too structured in some ways . . . but I still like it much better than I did the other.

All four of these teachers agree that the Hill differs from the conventional school, but disagree over the magnitude and significance of that difference.

> Interviewer: What would you say are the main differences between the Hill and the Junior High East?
>
> Walt: First of all, everything. The basic thing here is, you can teach what you want, the way you want . . . But the other, big motive to me is that I can get around to kids on an individual level, on a real individual basis, which I could never do at a school like the East, cause there's just too many kids.

Choice is an important part of the difference:

> Susan: Well, the kids at the Hill have a choice of what they want to learn and what they want to study in each specific subject area . . . And not only do they have the choice of which course they want to take, they have the choice of making up their schedule.
>
> Frances: As it stands right now I think the main point of the school would be to offer kids, um, choices. You know, that's how I see it as different from the parent building, and that's about all.

The general proposition is that the Hill, by giving students and teachers more options, is better able to meet the needs of individual students:

> Frances: I think there's more opportunity to motivate kids here, though. Because we have more freedom to do things that will probably stimulate their interests . . .

Teachers cite field trips as another clear contrast with conventional schools:

> Susan: Another thing is field trips. We go on quite a few field trips -- sometimes just on the spur of the moment, which you can't do at the regular junior high because you have other classes to take care of and nobody can watch your classes. And we're trying to get them to see that they can learn from the things around them.

> Walt: Field trips I'm 100% in favor of. We have not gone on one field trip that I do not feel is good . . . But I don't feel field trips have to be relevant to what we're studying. I think sometimes they are and that's good . . . but I also -- again, I'm really big on exposing them to as many possible areas as I can.

Choice and field trips provide examples of policies the teachers felt were inherently beneficial. They were part of the daily routine at the Hill and the teachers organized these activities in a fairly straightforward manner.

Free time, however, illustrates the way a policy was modified in response to reality constraints. At the beginning of the year students had the option of scheduling free periods for themselves, but at the time of writing, free time was strictly a matter of negotiation between student and teacher -- an ad hoc decision, not an assumed right. Susan saw the purpose of free time as a way to teach students responsibility:

> So they can learn some self-discipline, I think. And so they can handle some freedom . . . They're just going to have to learn to handle it, if they're going to go on to further education . . . Even more than the self-discipline, to be able to direct themselves.

But she also noted that circumstances (such as complaints from other teachers who used the building) dictated tighter control of that free time:

> But they *find* free time. They leave class two minutes early, get to the next class three minutes late. That gives them five minutes right there. They can do a lot in five minutes; we've learned that. There just sometimes is no way to give every kid someplace to go every period, unless you give him something like ten periods of science a week. And then he just haunts you, so he might have one (free) period a week or something like that. We tried to reduce that because the first term we did have enormous amounts of kids roaming around, and they didn't have any place to go.

Walt and Frances make similar comments:

> Walt: . . . free periods, they have been used by some students effectively and by a fair amount of students ineffectively. I think a couple of free periods a week are okay. I think more than one a day are too many, because they tend to get in trouble.

> Frances: I think free periods are a mistake at this age, unless the kid really has something that he wants to do, even if it's only sleeping. But I think having a free period just for the sake of having a free period is a mistake. They have too much energy for that. I've found that a lot of kids who don't have free periods with their friends will come to my class and say, "Hey, can I spend my time here?"

Initially, free time was seen as an opportunity for "learning responsibility," but external circumstances led to a revision of the practice:

> Leila: You can't give them free time but say, "You can't disturb this, and you can't do this, and there's really not a god damn thing you can do unless you're a reader." . . . Unfortunately we're sort of in a bind. The building can't tolerate a whole lot of just screwing around, because of the other programs and because of the office of Dr. Stoff [Director of Pupil Personnel Services] and classrooms . . . .

We find a parallel situation in the area of student participation in decision making. The teachers agree in principle that such participation is good, but find that in practice, it doesn't work out so well -- the chief source of difficulty lying with the students' own capacities:

> Walt: Kids don't really want to follow that stuff through. Sometimes they follow stuff through, like the lounge (creating and running a student lounge). I was surprised and happy that they followed that through, and that worked for a couple of months. I was really impressed by that. But then that just fell to pieces . . . They had three meetings three different times, and kids rarely came. So again, it was a choice that was given to the students, and if they wanted it badly enough they would have come. And they didn't.

Other teachers talk along the same lines:

> Interviewer: Would you say kids here participate a lot in making decisions?
>
> Leila: More than in the average school, but not a lot. A lot of times, things are negotiable, so on a low level of decision making I think they have a significant degree. I mean, a kid can negotiate with his teacher about his work and his requirements and about his free time . . . But as far as institutional decision making, you know, I'm not sure -- I'm almost convinced that kids at a junior high level aren't capable of any sustained decision making . . . Kids can sustain interest . . . for a meeting, and a couple of kids for a second meeting, but that's it, and I don't think the pressure ought to be on the kids to have that sustained commitment.
>
> Interviewer: Do you think they ought to have more say?
>
> Susan: Yeah, at times I do, because for instance when we made up the last schedule in November I was disappointed because none of the kids had any input at all, so we discussed that and let them come this time. So that was a step forward . . . In the decision making itself -- I don't know, sometimes I feel that I don't have any say myself, you know, never mind the kids. It's hard, I can't really say how much they have.

Choices and fields trips were integral to the teachers' ideas about what school ought to be like and these policies were reasonably easy to sustain. In two other areas, free time and decision-making, pragmatic considerations made the original ideals untenable, even though there was general agreement concerning their value.

The Attrition of Ideals: Maintenance Needs. The issues that occupied the teachers' time and energy concerned the practical problems of running a school -- the institution's "maintenance needs." The Hill teachers focused on devising and implementing schedules, responding to student crises, organizing parents' meetings, lobbying for school committee support, and on more mundane but real issues like getting a gym, planning field trips, figuring out what to do about lockers, and the like. All these activities had to do with running the school, and it was in this realm, not at a more abstract ideological level, that there were disagreements among the faculty members.

> Leila: Methodology is where it's at at this school. I feel at odds myself with, for example, Susan and Frances. Walt and I sort of stand on one side now, and Susan and Frances on the other. Philosophy is such a negulous thing -- You can discuss philosophy with someone, and I think people can reach agreements . . . But when it's methodology -- that's much more wrapped up with a person's identity, and their whole value system, and it's very hard to compromise on, very hard to deal with rationally. I think that's where our conflict is. We have a vague picture of what we want the school to be, and it's pretty similar -- in its vagueness. But when it gets down to the nitty gritty of how do you proceed from X to Y, that's where the conflict comes in.

The cource of this question revolved around differing concepts of "organization" and "flexibility."

> Leila: So I see organization as a really important thing in running a flexible school, and Susan and Frances don't see that. In my prejudiced view, I see them as saying, "Flexibility is spontaneity." And I say, "Flexibility is organization." So that, in very simple terms, is where the conflict is.
>
> Susan: . . . It's just the way they are: very organized people, whereas Frances and I aren't as organized.

The general point is that the possibility of achieving alternative school ideals diminishes in the face of immediate priorities:

> Leila: Ideally, for example, I'd like to have a social studies program that has the kids out of the school most of the time -- doing studies, doing interviews, doing pollution studies: all that kind of thing. But given the reality of the kids, and the reality of my own limits, my own imagination, and lack of time to really do some brainstorming -- I know what I want, but, you know, I never get there.

This attrition of ideals in favor of pragmatic considerations is not a unique phenomenon. It fits into a pattern common to all organizations: a shift in focus away from ultimate goals and toward immediate instrumental concerns (like survival). Michels described just such a shift as part of his formulation of an "iron law of oligarchy."[3] The Hill's preoccupation with daily matters does not, then, represent any forfeit of responsibility. A strong case could be made, in fact, that the Hill teachers spend more time clarifying their ultimate concerns as educators than do teachers at most schools. For example, at one point each teacher distributed to the others a written statement of educational goals and assumptions.

Yet the predominance of institutional maintenance needs has special significance in the context of schools and particularly for alternative schools. In most organizations, participants might be perfectly content in their daily pursuits: the organization's purpose is not very salient. This may be less true for schools which, as one of their cultural functions, are said to serve as "repositories of ideals."[4] And more than conventional schools, alternative schools have claimed the role of translating social "oughts" into pedagogical reality ("freedom," "community).

We would expect, then, in an alternative school situation a degree of tension between the institutional maintenance needs, on the one hand, and the school's goals and ideals, on the other. The degree of tension depends primarily on the salience of alternative school ideals for different teachers. Where an ideology of social reform and educational reform is explicit and salient, the teachers are likely to feel constrained to achieve consistency between daily life and guiding ideals. We can call this constraint "ideological press."

Most of the time the Hill teachers did not define their work in terms of overall goals or purposes; ideological questions seemed remote:

> Interviewer: What would you say is the most important goal of this school?
>
> Leila (laugh): I have no idea! I mean, I really can't -- I don't know what it means to say all that pablum -- "take individual kids and deal with them individually." You know -- all that stuff. I don't know what that means. . . What matters is how you implement (goals).

Such comments suggest there is an inevitable gap between ultimate concerns and day-to-day issues. As Jackson writes,

> At the simplest level it seems the teacher is just too busy to be bothered with the intellectual frills of learning theory and precisely defined objectives. Faced with twenty or thirty restless students he has enough to do without worrying whether his behavior is in accord with the pronouncements of the theorists or the admonishments of the curriculum planners.[5]

Despite the remoteness of ideological concerns, all the Hill teachers are aware of an "alternative schools movement." But two, Frances and Leila, experience more of an ideological press. More than the others they have a touch of utopian orientation. They feel an urgency to do more; they respond to a sense of the "ought." For them ideological concerns are more salient (even though Leila scoffs at the idea of "goals").

Their ideological press is clearly illustrated if we compare the Hill teachers' reasons for coming to teach at the Hill in the first place. Frances and Leila cite professional goals -- the chance to do more. Walt and Susan responded to the same question in terms of pragmatic considerations:

> Leila: Well, I taught at a conventional high school for two years and I didn't think I could do some of the things I wanted to do . . . The constraints in a normal school were just too great to do the things I thought should be done.
>
> Frances: I thought it would be a beautiful opportunity to do those things that I always wanted to do but couldn't do because of the restrictions of the parent building (the West Jr. High School).

Susan and Walt though not satisfied with teaching in conventional settings, arrived at the Hill more by default; they did not seek it out. Walt was hired in the middle of the year to replace a pregnant teacher. In his version of the story, he was hired because his previous principal "liked the way (he) patrolled the sanitary." Susan came to the Hill as a result of an administrative reshuffle that eliminated her job in the conventional system.

The ideological press experienced by Leila and Frances stands out in their comments comparing the Hill to other alternative schools. Both teachers express frustration at the gap between the realities of the Hill and certain alternative school ideals:

> Interviewer: Have things turned out the way you expected them to?
>
> Frances: Not really. I wanted the school to be a real alternative school and I don't think it's become that. . . I'm afraid that we're using the word alternative too loosely, and although we are in that national alternatives magazine or whatever -- that publication, I wonder . . . I think that we're still teaching at kids and I'd like to see a change in the way we approach the kids and also I'd like to see a change in the whole structure . . . I guess the thing that frustrates me the most is the fact that I'd like this school to be a little more open then it is, and I'd like us to have that as a real, very important goal, cause it's one of my important goals.
>
> Leila: From my own stereotypes of what a community school is, as compared to what a conventional school is, this is something that is in the middle I think. The teachers are struggling to make it more of a community school and trying to push it in that direction, so that some days it's more toward the conventional side . . (and) in other aspects it's much more sort of like a type of community school . . . All the teachers came out of conventional schools . . . so under stress when problems arise, the initial reaction is to do what you know, and what we all know is how to do it conventionally. And so I think there's always that tendency -- to fall back on a conventional solution.

More than the other two teachers, Frances and Leila emphasized the way conventional practices persist despite mammoth faculty effort toward creative policy. But even though these two teachers evaluated their work in terms of abstract ideals they usually took opposite sides on questions of school policy; both experienced ideological press, but the press operated in different directions.

Frances' main orientation was toward individualism as a root value of alternative education. She was concerned with the way institutional arrangements interfered with teachers' efforts to meet the diverse needs of individual students. For her, any strain toward uniformity undermined her principal objectives. For example, she describes her feelings about trying to teach textbook math:

> I think maybe I should have continued it, but I couldn't stand teaching it. It was completely against what I believe, but I know a lot of kids felt comfortable in it, and that maybe I was inflexible in that way, you know? I'm so bent on my own way of wanting to open things up that I'm preventing them from finding a niche that they're comfortable in. I still haven't resolved that problem.

For her the strongest thrust of ideology was in the direction of individualization through providing flexible and diverse curriculum options.

Leila, on the other hand, seemed to define her priorities in terms of group, rather than individual, goals. She was more concerned with the school as an institutional context that stressed community:

> Since I as a person am intrigued by the thing of building a school, I have a tendency to try to view the program as a whole; I don't view it as just a social studies classroom . . . whereas I think Susan and Frances tend to view it as the math thing or the science thing.[6]

In sum, ideological press at the Hill pulled the staff in opposite directions, exacerbating faculty conflicts. Frances (and Susan) tended to value policies emphasizing individualization; Leila (and Walt) tended to value practices that stressed community. Competing ideals were at stake. In the search for an alternative to conventional practices the teachers may have locked themselves into group dilemmas over the direction of their policies -- dilemmas reinforced by an either/or approach to important ideals.

The Hill's External Context: The Encapsulated Alternative. The Hill teachers have little time to clarify the role their school should play in the larger society. Despite an awareness of larger social issues affecting and affected by education, for the most part they look inward.

The Hill faculty concentrates more on improving the quality of life within their own institution than on providing a generalizeable model of school reform. That task is formidable enough.

For example, the Hill teachers do not see themselves and other alternative schools as fellow members of a vanguard of social change. One teacher dealt with the question this way:

> Interviewer: Do you see this school as hooked up with some alternative schools movement? Do you see it in those kinds of terms?
>
> Susan: I don't know. I guess we're supposed to, but I don't, really. I mean we don't speak to anybody from any other alternative schools. We don't speak to people who are in open classrooms in Whitetown . . . Once in a great while we might speak to people from one of the other two annexes.

None of the Hill teachers defines changing other schools as a high immediate priority. At the same time there is a sense that the annex schools do affect the Whitetown community:

> Interviewer: Do you see the Hill as part of a larger movement to reform schools.
> Walt (pause): Yeah. First of all I think something has to be said of the fact that it's in Whitetown. There have been lots and lots of comments sent out from principals . . . that Whitetown is basically a conservative community, and a school like this would never take effect, first of all, and would never work, secondly. But there was a definite contingent of more liberal parents living in Whitetown that had kids of school age that were willing to support the program, and I like to think that it's not always going to be a small contingent. I like to think that we're kind of the initiators of a program like this . . . .

Teachers often attributed their lack of wider impact to the Hill's physical isolation from the conventional schools. Given distance and time pressures, any suggestion for increased dialogue seems somewhat far-fetched. Leila suggested, in this connection, that even if the Hill were housed in the parent building, the presence of an alternative might simply confirm conventional teachers in their present assumptions about education.

Another reason for the lack of any external thrust lay in the fact that the Hill's own existence was precarious given the local financial state and the school committee politics. With issues like that at stake, the Hill was hardly in a position of strength with respect to the far more permanent conventional schools.

I draw attention to the Hill's limited impact not to indicate they are in any sense failing at something that should be done, but only to underscore the extent to which immediate and practical concerns occupy the faculty's attention. This seems to be almost an inevitable by-product of creating and sustaining a new institution, especially one that has at least one eye on changing prevailing social patterns.

Educational Ideology at the Lake

One stereotype of the alternative school teacher is that of a radical reformer-social activist. The Lake faculty deviates considerably from that image. The teachers' ideas about education seem to stem from personal insights rather than from any set of universal principles about the nature of society. They seem to enjoy working with each other.

Ted and Ben, the Social Studies and science teachers, were the first teachers at the Lake. Both Ben and Ted survived the school's first-year crises, not the least of which was a severe faculty split: Ben and Ted took a gradualist position about the amount of freedom extended to students; the two other teachers pushed for a greater departure from the conventional school structure. When the two more radical teachers left at the end of the year, Ted and Ben were in a position to organize the school on a somewhat tighter basis.

The two women faculty members, Jean and Sally, are both considerably younger than the men. They teach English and math, respectively. Jean had three years of experience teaching in the local school system, and Sally had previously taught in an international school in Tokyo.

Like the Hill faculty, the four teachers at the Lake saw their school as different from the conventional school. Choice of courses and field trips come up at the Lake, too, as major differences from the Junior High East. There seems to be a kind of general agreement about another difference -- the student-teacher relationship. All four teachers talk about various aspects of this relationship as a primary difference:

> Interviewer: What are the most important differences between this set-up and the East?
> Ted: Oh, very definitely that people know each other and care about each other.
>
> Jean: There are so many it's hard to say. I think one of the main ones is the idea that it's a smaller group -- both of teachers and of students, and that you work closely with everyone.

Sally, qualifying her views as based on hearsay, also mentioned that teachers got to know students more fully in the Lake environment. In sum, although the Lake teachers do mention the same kinds of specific practices that the Hill teachers bring up, their emphasis was more on the general quality of relationships and community than on any particular policy.

In contrast with the Hill, the Lake teachers did not have trouble accepting the validity of offering free time to students. At the time of writing, students could schedule three free periods per week, and the teachers did not encounter too many problems with this. Teachers differed in their justification for free time, but all four approved of the practice. Two examples follow:

> Sally: It's still good, I think, to get kids out of the classroom situation, where they just sit down and talk or play tennis or something and they open up.
>
> Ben: Well, I think that if kids learn slowly, a little bit at a time, to handle freedom in a responsible manner, that this certainly will help them in later life . . . The sooner you can learn how to handle your free time, the better off you'll be. Not only in terms of studying but in terms of finding things to do for yourself.

In explaining this difference between the Hill and the Lake, two variables come to mind: size and physical plant. The smaller numbers at the Lake, plus its relative isolation and recreational facilities, both made free time a more feasible policy. The Lake teachers, for example, did not have to cope with other programs in the same building.

The Lake teachers, as a group, viewed decision making participation in a somewhat different light than the Hill Faculty. Ben assumes a posture quite similar to the comments from the Hill teachers, but Ted defined decision making as individual decision-making rather than considering it in a broader sense.

> Interviewer: How about kids participating in making the decisions?

> Ben: I think more of it happened last year than has happened this year. I think that many -- that this year the teachers are making more decisions in terms of running the school . . . There is no more student court . . . I'd like to see the kids get involved in making decisions. It's hard -- sometimes it's hard for kids to assume the role of adults in this capacity.
>
> Ted: They're called to make (decisions) all the time . . . First, they have to make decisions about their courses, then they have to make their own decisions about getting to places on time, and the consequences of it. They have to make decisions virtually about whether or not they'll come to school . . . They have to make decisions about the use of their free time . . . Kids have to make decisions about doing homework. They have many more decisions to make about personal friendships . . . .

In his statement, Ted apparently excludes the realm of institutional decision-making from consideration. In practice, he frequently called for student opinions and, in fact, he offered a course in "Laws" that in part came up with a set of rules for the school. His statement seemed consistent with Sally's point of view:

> Sally: At the moment there are not that many big decisions. In terms of the things that really affect the students, it's their own schedule and the types of courses they want and that's always been asked.

Jean, like Ben, sees things more in terms of the institutional forms that exist in the school, mentioning the school's daily ritual of a meeting at the end of the day.

> Interviewer: Do you think kids here participate very much in making decisions?
> Jean: I don't think they do, and I think they should, in a way. I mean, things like -- just our general meetings sometimes bother me, you know. And the teacher says his things then makes his announcements, then we're all done, then the meeting is finished. And the kids sit there pretty passively, and they're not really encouraged to have their say at meetings or stuff like that. I think they're always given a voice in what goes on in school.

> Most of us, most of the time, are pretty well aware of what kids think of a particular project of a particular idea . . . and they influence whatever decisions we make, but it is still that we're making the decisions.

What I find noteworthy in these quotations is the hint, in Ted's and Sally's accounts, that the school is operating under a well-established framework where there are not that many institutional decisions to be made. Even Jean's comments suggest only lingering doubts about the meeting ritual that most people take for granted. Without advocating that students should be involved in such decisions, nor denying that student opinions are acknowledged, I find in these statements a reflection of the Lake's smoothness -- the lack of turmoil. The school seemed to be a self-contained enclave, and the teacher's views about choice, free time, field trips, and decision making reflect that smoothness.

Maintenance Needs at the Lake. The Lake faculty worked together quite easily: there was little indication that running the school occasioned serious staff disagreement.

Here again, size and physical environment seem to be important considerations. But we can also point to "history" as an important variable. The Lake, one year older than the Hill, had already gone through several changes. The extra year undoubtedly serves as a source of "tradition" to draw upon. For example, the Lake schedule varied in content from term to term, but except for brief intersession periods, the number and length of periods remained constant. Nancy, as the newest faculty member, was most aware of the impact of "tradition":

> And so when we had a special intersession between Thanksgiving and Christmas, they all knew there was going to be this special time . . . They wouldn't necessarily feel like they had to remind me in November that everything would stop at Thanksgiving. They knew it and didn't really know that I wouldn't.

Relative to most schools, the Lake faculty worked well as a team. But although the school was a lively, interesting place, I found less of a sense of evolving purpose than at the Hill. The Lake teachers, as it were, had made some prior decisions about what the school was about; they seemed committed to improving the school as a place to work with others and making it a more pleasant environment; yet, compared to the Hill, there was less of a sense of change over time. When I shared an earlier draft of this chapter with the Hill faculty, they argued that my observations suffered from what the principal called "the snapshot problem": I depicted the school as it was in the fall of 1972, not as it was in March, 1973. This criticism was, of course, just. But in sharing the same chapters with the Lake staff, I encountered a different concern -- effects of my research on unsympathetic observers of alternative schools. This concern was also legitimate and even more important; the point here, however, is that the Lake reaction was one of protecting what they had; the Hill staff focused on my failure to capture change over time.

Let us consider this point more closely. Most alternative schools have a great deal of difficulty achieving a healthy stability. One of the ideas behind this chapter is that a narrow ideology of social change can impede running a school.

In this sense the Hill is more typical of other alternative schools -- groping for purpose, conflict over means, a tension between alternative school ideals and the realities of institutional life. From this perspective, the Lake is much more "together" in its efforts: the experience of working there is probably somewhat less draining than working at the Hill, for example.

Yet there is an obverse side to the coin. What happens when an institution "settles in," when it becomes established? Then the organization's participants face the problem of "renewal." In short, the Hill and the Lake seem to be at different "stages" in a "life cycle" of creating alternative institutions: the Hill seems to be working through conflicts toward coalescing goals; the Lake seems to have already passed through a stage of polarization over means and ends and the teachers focused more on implementing policies within a general framework of mutual agreement.

The mutual agreement can be seen in the teachers' statements of purpose:

> Interviewer: What would you say is the main point of the Lake?
>
> Jean: (laugh) Do we have one? Um, oh, wow! I think it's hard to say, there are so many. I suppose one of the main ones, if not the main one, is to get kids to know themselves, to realize that they can make their own decisions and that those decisions influence who they are and who they become.

Sally, responding to the same question, says:

> I think I feel one. Nothing, as far as I've been told or discussed, has been strictly formulated. I think one idea seems to be, um, I don't know -- sort of general exposure to different types of subjects and different types of people . . .

Ben elaborates a number of points, then summarizes the "main point" as "freedom with responsibility, and exposure -- just plain exposure -- to all kinds of knowledge, and all kinds of learnings and teachings. I think this is mainly what we're doing." Ted's statement seems couched in somewhat different terms:

> Oh, concern for other people; thoughtfulness; Golden Rule -- Do unto Others; uh, love. These kinds of words come to mind. But without ignoring the need for facts that you've got to have in the real world. You can't escape from the real world. You can't make that choice for the kid, at least. You've got to keep them on that main road so that they can make the choice themselves.

I find a lot of overlap among these statements. It seems important and helpful to have a considerable amount of agreement concerning basic ends. But agreement need not imply foreclosure: issues like basic goals are not settled forever, but are subject to revision and clarification. And for two of the teachers, such a process of clarification was needed and desired.

> Sally: (T)here must be something common. I don't know what it is -- I wish that we would talk about it more, as teachers, what our educational philosophies are, or why we do something one way. But we don't.

> Jean: I think that's one of the lacks ... In discussing day to day things, or planning the next term, or creating an intersession -- you know, our meetings are always so crammed full that we never, you know, take a weekend and say, "What is the philosophy of this place?" I mean we all feel it, but I don't know that it's ever verbalized that much.

One of these teachers went on to suggest that the status quo at the Lake worked well, but that if more goal clarification took place, some conflicts might well surface:

> Interviewer: Do you think real differences between the teachers would emerge?
> Teacher: Might well. Yeah, I think so . . . I think there would be real differences, say, between Ted, on one side, and Sally and Jean, on the other, or maybe between Ben and the other three. I don't know if I could specify what the differences would be . . . There might also be the conflict of personalities, too . . . You might not be able to work together.

There is the clear implication in what she says that the lack of goal clarification is in some sense functional to making the school a smooth-sailing vessel.

In sum, at the Lake there is less a sense of a gap between reality and a set of ideals and more overtones of satisfaction and contentment with the way things are (a satisfaction not altogether unjustified). Utopian orientations are muted. The teachers feel less need to clarify the underlying principles of their work:

> Ted: No, I'm not an ideological man -- I'm really not. I'm more of a pragmatic man. There are things that I stand up on my hind legs and get upset about, but I don't think conceptually most of the time. I'm not this kind of person. I listen occasionally to people who are like that --

> particularly doctoral students (present company excepted) and they talk in concepts. Jesus Christ! I can't begin to talk in those concepts and this is not my style. I'm in the middle of this, whatever it is, and I'm up to my elbows. And this I can feel, and feel part of, and that's where I am.

> Jean: Looking at the faculty, I think most of us are pretty pragmatic, you know. You know, we can decide on having a brunch or a picnic Thursday or go to the Island or something like that. Maybe we're not as much the "bullshit doctoral candidates" who'll sit around and write position papers, for example. You know, I'm sure we could churn stuff out like that, especially if we were pushed for some pragmatic reason, like getting a grant or something . . . .

One reason for this reluctance to philosophize comes from the school's history:

> Ben: Mr. Jacobs hired four very different people, philosophically speaking. And, uh, you could categorize us, I guess, as probably being two conservatives and two progressives. And at the start, really, we spent most of our time sitting and hassling over philosophy, and trying to come to some common ground. My position at that time was to start the school and make it sort of a mini-Junior High East -- sort of on the same basis. This is a conservative point of view. And from there to loosen the strings as they seemed able to handle it. Two of the other teachers did not see it that way. They wanted to start right off the bat and bring the kids in and give them all kinds of freedom right away. And I still, even now to this day, I think it was a mistake.

Ted and Ben may be recuperating from the ideological wars of the previous year, finding it more productive to stay away from ideological discussion.

Of the four main teachers, only Jean described her reasons for coming in terms of finding a place to pursue certain goals or ideals. Ted, who had been teaching at the East Junior High School was "not particularly eager" to join the Lake faculty; he came at the principal's request. Ben and Sally were (at different points in time) simply looking for employment and almost by chance happened to fall into positions at the Lake. Jean, however, spoke of her prior acquaintance with and interest in the ideas of an alternative school:

> Well, I taught a year at the high school here, and three years at the junior high, and when the Lake was first opened I was very interested in the idea of the school and the concept of the school . . . I was really happy that I could come . . . There's the opportunity here to work out a lot more things.

At the Hill, two of the teachers had a more utopian orientation. They felt that conventional practices encroached upon their best efforts to do something different. But at the Lake, there was less sense of a tension between conventional and utopian environments. Instead the Lake teachers seemed to feel that the regular junior high school was simply another world, discontinuous with anything at the annex. All four of the Lake teachers portrayed their school as profoundly different from the conventional school.

The Lake's External Context. The Lake teachers disclaim strong ties with any more broadly based impetus for educational reform. They seem content with their own enclave; changing the world outside is not a high priority for them, although they do retain interest in what's going on in the Whitetown schools.

Again a pragmatic orientation emerges:

> Interviewer: Do you see the Lake as part of a larger movement?
>
> Jean: That's really hard. Most of the time I don't think in terms of larger movements, just because for myself I think there are only so many things I can be involved in. So, you know, if I'm busy relating this to the Omega Point in the General Universe, you know, I won't have anything prepared for tomorrow.

She further qualifies her position by denying that the Lake should be a generalizeable model; instead she advocates a pluralism of educational approaches -- a kind of voucher system:

> Interviewer: Do you think all schools should move in the direction of the Lake?
>
> Jean: . . . I really just don't deal in big generalizations like that. I'm really glad for the opportunity for myself. I think most of the kids here -- or at least a lot of them -- have really profited by the opportunity; I think that's great. But I think there are a lot of other kids who are much more suited to other types of school atmospheres and environments, and I think it's really marvelous here that people here have the opportunity to choose, and maybe that's the way it always should be.

In her view alternative schools might even be somewhat counterrevolutionary:

> I've wondered sometimes if a school like this isn't a cop-out. You know, we're saying that the regular school thing isn't worth the time for the student, and yet we're saying that he should be here for an eight hour day and all that kind of stuff which, you know, might be nonsense. Maybe if there weren't alternative schools it would force more kids to -- maybe not at this age, maybe at a little earlier age -- to drop out and find their own alternatives . . . So I don't know that (the Lake) is part of a larger movement. I hope that it has some influence on the schools in Whitetown. I wish there were some more interrelatedness there . . . but at present there's not much interaction.

Like Jean, Ted "pays little attention" to any larger reform movement. He argues that, as long as the Lake maintains its physical isolation from the main schools, it will have little external influence. Sally expresses an interest in other alternative programs, but instead of seeking to change other schools, she wants to "try and go out and observe some of these things and see if some of them can be brought to the Lake." She sees other alternative schools as a resource rather than as companions in any reform effort.

Ben, who describes himself as "a little bit more conservative" than the other teachers, is, perhaps paradoxically, the only teacher who sees the Lake as part of a "larger movement":

> I think we've spearheaded a lot of things in Whitetown, a lot of changes. But as far as the school is concerned, I have my doubts whether it will continue to exist. I think it will be absorbed into the junior high, but I think that some of the ideas and the philosophy behind the school will still be there. And I think you'll see outcroppings of our ideas throughout the junior high. So I do feel that this is a pretty general movement.

Conclusions

We find among the annex teachers no pure types of "ideologies" or "utopias"; the two blend together. Instead the teachers experience in varying degrees a tension between educational ideals and institutional realities. Valued goals, like giving students free time and a chance to participate in decision making, are modified by the maintenance needs of running a school. Pragmatic considerations interfere with the direct translation of goals into practice. In this sense the two annex schools differ from the alternative school stereotype that says alternative schools are geared toward an ethic of social change. There is little sense that the teachers can sustain a priority on creating a model of institutional reform. Immediate concerns overwhelm any efforts to address the external context of the schools. The teachers' main focus is on matters of internal policy implementation, not on clarifying an educational ideology nor proselytizing that ideology.

We can describe the differences between the two schools' ideological orientations in terms of ideological press. At the Hill the teachers are divided over issues of specific practice; that division reflects a polarization of educational ideals. Frances leans toward individualistic policies; Leila favors policies emphasizing group collaboration. In contrast, any such differences are muted at the Lake. Having already travelled through a period of intense faculty conflict, the Lake teachers seem to accept and work within a given institutional framework. At the Hill the teachers are still groping to define such a framework. Thus the two schools face somewhat different problems and represent varying kinds of ideological orientations.

We cannot determine from teachers' ideologies alone whether these two annex schools represent alternatives to conventional socialization patterns. Yet we can make some observations about the obstacles to establishing such alternatives. First, given the salience of daily problems it is difficult to retain a clear vision of the school's relationship to its external context. The internal and external contexts are divorced from each other. Second, even when teachers are able to maintain some ideological perspective they face contradictions in valued goals. At these two annex schools, then, we encounter how difficult it is to articulate with any precision and power the way alternative schools either mesh with or confront the larger society.

In the next chapter we look at the way teachers organize instructional and other learning activities. There too there is a mixture of conventional and unconventional practices and a corresponding ambiguity in what the teachers demand of their students.

Footnotes to Chapter IV

[1] Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1968), First Edition, 1936.

[2] Another relevant distinction comes from politics -- the difference between "locals" and "cosmopolitans." The local politician is parochial in his outlook, symbolizing "the shared sentiments of the community rather than any special set of ends or virtues." A cosmopolitan, on the other hand, is a person with minimal ties to the locality but a strong attachment to . . . national and international problems, ideas, movements, fashions, and cultures . . . to him, action is or ought to be governed by general principles." Some alternative school people seem closely aligned with the cosmopolitan approach; others -- especially where there is an emphasis on community participation -- are more local in their orientation. A mixture of types appears in the annex schools. See James Q. Wilson, The Amateur Democrat (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), especially pp. 10-11.

[3] Roberto Michels, Political Parties (New York: Collier Books, 1962).

[4] Willard Waller, Sociology of Teaching (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), p. 33.

[5] Philip W. Jackson, Life in Classrooms (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 166.

[6] Although I agree with Leila's observation, she did not imply -- nor do I -- that Susan and Frances are either negligent or oblivious to the school as a whole. It seems to me a question of emphasis.

CHAPTER V

THE RANGE OF LEARNING SETTINGS

"There are four kinds of teachers in the world," one Hill student told me. "Math, science, English, and social studies." For him, subject matter instruction defined the boundaries of education.

At a conventional school, perhaps, his definition would be adequate. At Whitetown's regular junior high school, for example, a master schedule hangs inside the principal's office; theoretically, at least, the schedule pinpoints the location of all students and teachers at any time during the day. Except for unsupervised moments in cafeterias, locker rooms, lavatories, and corridors, students at the East Junior High spend their entire day in formal instructional (or custodial) settings: scheduled activities at predetermined locations with a state-certified adult in charge.

At the annex schools the daily routine is somewhat different. The master schedule only approximate the daily events. There are no bells; classes are frequently suspended in response to special activities -- a guest speaker, a field trip, a community meeting to discuss student grievances. The teachers organize a multitude of informal or unscheduled events in addition to math, science, English, and social studies: subject matter instruction explains only part of what they do.

This chapter explores the range of learning settings at the Hill and the Lake. Because that range exceeds the standard fare of most conventional schools I have included, in addition to a discussion of the way teachers organize their classrooms, material about field trips and free time. Both of these "settings" are distinctive features of the annex schools, outside the conventional range of school settings.

In the previous chapters I considered the annex schools as institutional entities, comparing and contrasting them to other schools. At this point I look at the internal variation of each school. The assumption guiding this examination is that schools do not present uniform demands on students. In the annex schools, at least, constraints vary from setting to setting. Field trips and free time may demand different responses than classroom settings. One teacher may differ from another in his or her classroom expectations. In terms of the central constructs outlined in Chapter III, the specific forms of hierarchy, formality, and achievement press vary from classroom to classroom, from field trips to free time. This chapter describes that variation, answering the general question, "What is the range of learning settings at each school?"

To answer this question I relied on two sources of information -- direct observations in classrooms and interviews with teachers. For the classroom observations one or two observers kept running narrative records of what a teacher said and did for a class period. Each of the eight teachers was observed at least ten complete periods; most were observed at least fifteen times. In addition, the student observations entailed many further classroom hours. (See Appendix II for a full description of analytic categories.)

In addition to the classroom observations, I used the teachers' self descriptions in their interviews as indications of the way they dealt with free time and field trips.

A number of cautionary statements ought to be made about the data and its interpretation. First is the problem of context. The descriptions that follow heighten the differences between teachers. These differences, when seen from a broader perspective, may not be very large at all. For example, I depict Susan as a stricter teacher than Frances, but the differences between the two blur somewhat if the two are compared to many conventional, authoritarian teachers. The "extremes" at each annex are not very far apart. In my judgment, all eight teachers conducted classrooms that were substantially more pleasant than most conventional settings. The teachers clearly knew their students well and usually treated them with fairness. The contrasts among the annex teachers are relative, not absolute.

Related to this is the "snapshot" issue. I protray teachers as I saw them during one period of time, not necessarily as they are now. The teachers themselves made this clear in their comments on an early draft of this chapter. Teachers change over time, particularly less experienced teachers, and the portrait I sketch is in some senses a static one. Waller quotes a definition of a successful teachers as "one who knows how to get on and off his high horse rapidly."[1] Although I have tried to do justice to the complexity and dilemmas of teaching, my "snapshot" catches some of the teachers "off" and some of them "on."

Learning Settings at the Hill

Susan -- the students call her Miss Dooley -- taught courses in genetics, meteorology, and chemistry during the first term. She was extremely active in carrying out some of the school's administrative chores. Sometimes this activity led to circumstances she objected to:

> I end up getting the dumpy job of keeping kids after school which I very much resent.

Susan saw free time and field trips as useful parts of school life. For her, free time was a chance to learn to handle freedom and field trips were valuable as a way of

> just exposing them to things around them. I mean there's so much around, just going out for a walk on a nice day or on a rainy day or on a snowy day or on any type of day -- just to see what's in the community.

She rejected the notion that there should be careful preparation and follow-up for field trips, arguing that even if there wasn't much present conceptualization, things might make sense at some future point:

> We do get a lot of flak about "Why don't you have follow-ups on all your field trips?" (We went to a potato chip factory.) They can learn a lot of stuff about assembly lines, but that's not what they're seeing. They're seeing how potato chips are being made. But some day when they're studying about assembly lines or mass production or something . . . .

During the first term Susan ran her classes primarily on a worksheet basis: students completed assigned tasks individually at their seats. She sometimes presented material to a group at large, but this was rare. In her chemistry class, students completed simple laboratory experiments in pairs or threes and then wrote up the results. After Susan approved a lab report the student could proceed to the next experiment.

Susan described herself as subject-matter oriented, particularly with respect to the worksheet she used. But she added that she frequently allowed students to pursue individual projects on topics she herself knew little about. She stressed a skills approach to teaching:

> My classes are more research oriented. I'd rather have them know where to go to find the answers and go and look things up and find what resources they have . . . .

The burden of student work involved finding right answers to questions through researching various textbooks around the room.

Students generally regarded Susan as the strictest of the Hill teachers. She seldom kicked a person out of her class, but frequently exhorted students to get to work. She liked her students to be busy:

> Susan: OK, quiet down. The following people may do experiments. The rest of you can write your letters . . . OK, if I read your name, hustle. C'mon, let's go. You've got thirty minutes. (9/19/72)
>
> Susan: Come on, George! Let's do the work, let's do the work. Don't sit there! (9/19/72)

As they worked, Susan often cleaned test tubes or checked her records at the front of the room. Although she sometimes went around the room to offer help to students, she more often waited for them to approach her. In explaining this stance, Susan emphasized the importance of independent accomplishment:

> I try to go around (to different students) and if they have any questions, "Ask me," but I really like them to accomplish something on their own. That's one thing; a lot of kids complain -- well, not a lot, but there was one girl this morning that said, you know, "Gee, you're always saying, 'Find it yourself, find it yourself!' And I do say it a lot -- "Find it yourself" -- even if it's a really simple thing: "Try to do it yourself" . . . I want them to go through the process of finding it . . . .

Free wheeling in her approach to scheduling and field trips, Susan maintained a fairly tight procedural focus in her class. Her main classroom role is to prompt students and organize activities.

Walt, the English teacher, got special enjoyment from planning and executing field trips and school-wide activities. He made announcements, collected money, and coordinated many non-academic events. He participated regularly in the gym program in addition to teaching classes. He had a strong community orientation, commenting that "big events tend to pull the school together." He had a moderate faith in free time as a useful practice and was wholly enthusiastic about the value of field trips:

> I'm all for exposure to all kinds of elements . . . A kid, I don't think, has to like every field trip. I don't think that's important as long as he gets exposed to something and has an attitude toward it . . . I think at this age that's really important.

Walt taught a variety of courses -- Basic English, Public Speaking, Newspaper, creative writing, and ethnic literature. Public speaking consisted of students taking turns giving speeches. In Newspaper the atmosphere was quite loose; students conversed and wrote articles. He described his academic courses as more conservative in orientation:

> As far as class structure goes, I find it easier for, let's say, half a period, to instruct, and the last half of the period just to have the students do something, you know, like writing or reading or something like that. I find that if I do something for the first half of the period, then the kids will know what I'm talking about, they'll know what I expect from them much better . . .

Walt dominated most of the discussions in his classes, usually making every other remark. Although his practices varied according to the course, he often relied on seatwork -- completing a grammar exercise, or answering factual questions about a written passage. Most of his discussions were also fact-oriented. Rather than considering a number of possible right answers, Walt tended to reinforce one particular point he had in mind. The students are engaged in a game of "guess what's in the teacher's mind":

> Walt: How many are done?
> (About half the class raises hands. He asks for a summary of the reading assignment, then asks a series of short, factually oriented questions aimed at clarifying the narrative. He then shifts to a different order of question:)
> Walt: Why did they need gangs?
> Carl: Protection.
> Walt: OK, that's one answer. Why else?
> Jerry: To cause trouble.
> Stan: They've got nothing else to do.
> Walt: (pointing at Stan and speaking more loudly:) That's it! They're bored. (He goes on.) (9/12/72)

In terms of discipline, Walt is, as one student put it, "about tied with Miss Dooley." He issued directives rather than reasoned pleas:

> Walt: Now, Carol -- you and Fred cannot sit in here for these two periods and talk. (9/14/72)
>
> Walt: I have a bunch of announcements to make, so Listen. Joseph! Sit down! -- If you want to buy any of the books -- Alfonso, I'll have to remove you . . . (9/18/72)
>
> Walt: Can I have it quiet for a minute, please. The thing I don't want is for everyone to come in and make a social hour out of it . . . If you still don't know what to write about, come and see me . . . I don't want anyone sitting on the sill. Raymond! Jack,Raymond -- get off the couch and start doing something. (10/3/72).

Walt's classes were a mixture of traditional procedure and "being a good guy." He obviously enjoyed fun activities, role plays, and skits. He combined a traditional pedagogy with a warm personal presence.

Leila exerted boundless energy both inside and outside her classroom. She was articulate in defining school problems and pushed for organizational solutions to those problems.

She was quite critical of the way school had handled free time, arguing that the teachers had failed to provide any "decent options" for students. She was committed to using community resources and field trips, but felt such activities ought to be integrated with classroom topics, rather than "exposure" opportunities.

Her course included Cowboys and Indians, In-group/Out-group, Ethnic Studies, and Rich Man, Poor Man. Leila used worksheets a lot, particularly at the beginning of the year. As the term continued, she devoted more time to class discussions, in which she tried to get students to express and justify their own opinions on public issues. She tried to stimulate dialogue and controversy.

Leila's worksheets were sometimes obvious rote tasks (looking up the difference between "immigrant" and "emigrant") and sometimes more open-ended ("Write down what parts of the American Dream you share."). Students generally worked on such assignments individually or in pairs. Leila herself came to criticize the worksheet approach:

> . . . I switched to what I thought was in retrospect, entirely too independent kinds of stuff . . . I wasn't able to stay on top of it with individual kids, and I think it got boring for quite a few kids. . . (The work was) not even individualized so much as independent.

Her disciplinary measures sometimes invoked a sense of community obligation:

> Come on! Everybody's pulling together to get this thing working and you guys aren't helping at all. (10/30/72)

But like the other teachers, she more often simply flexed the muscles of her role:

> Hector! Get out in the hall and stay there. (11/8/72)

Her disciplinary efforts generally focused on excessive noise.

Leila rarely sat down during class. She moved around constantly, interacting with students who raised their hands or who approached her for help. She also tried to spend time with those students who did not work so well. She devoted many of her interactions to clarifying instructions or evoking student opinions.

Frances, the math teacher, had a very personal approach to students and her courses. In addition to her math classes, she taught "cardboard carpentry." Much of her teaching aimed at appealing to the students' internal sense of control and responsibility for learning. When such appeals failed, she felt quite disappointed, yet felt imposing stronger external controls would violate her fundamental notions about education:

> I think you have to be very, very sensitive to what the kids needs and who the kid is. I think you've got to do a lot of work helping the kid to internalize (controls) . . . If you don't give him the opportunity, though, to try to be responsible, then he'll never be responsible. I don't see myself as being the kind of teacher who has all the kids under his thumb. I don't believe in that at all. You let the kid hang himself.

She felt free time for seventh and eighth graders was a big mistake, but was exuberant over the possibilities of field trips:

> I think we're just scratching the surface as far as using the outside world as a learning tool. It's unfortunate that we confine ourselves to a building, especially at this age. God, they've got too much energy to be confined to a building.

Frances' classes were individualized through various worksheets, puzzles, and games. Most students worked on dittoed problems at (more or less) their own pace. There is a general uniformity of topic -- most of the class, for example, might be working on converting fractions into decimals. Her classes are free-floating in that it is the students who must make the choice of getting their folders and starting work. This process of deciding to work seems a central part of her courses, even more than mastery of subject matter:

> I'm not really that concerned about how much math they learn; I'm more concerned about their attitude toward learning.
>
> Kids have folders. I make the judgment on what things they need, but they can make the judgment on what things they're interested in, and what they want to study. Some kids come up and say, "I want to study algebra," and even if it's a kid who's pretty slow, you can put him into some

> form of algebra that's really easy and bone up on the basic skills at the same time, and I think that's effective . . . And that's why I couldn't, say, offer a course in trigonometry or a course in algebra, and let it be open to everyone. There I'd become a blackboard teacher and I'd lose some kids and I'd bore some others. I feel that the only way is for the kids to come to my class, get their folders, and get to work, and, if I possibly can, see everyone during that period . . . .

Frances moved about constantly during her classes, attending to different groups of students. Students wanting her help called out "Frances! Frances!" with varying degrees of effectiveness. Other students found it more rewarding to stand near her, waiting for her to be free. Still others took advantage of Frances' focused attention, using the opportunity to throw pillows or shoot paper clips behind her back. She reprimanded students often, but because she hopped from student to student, she was seldom in one place long enough to enforce her warnings. She was clearly the least strict of the teachers and the least effective disciplinarian.

Finally, Frances encouraged students to collaborate with each other, not penalizing them for comparing answers or discussing problems.

Commentary. As the previous chapter suggested, free time as an option for students raises mixed feelings among the teachers at the Hill. Free time was the setting with the least amount of adult supervision. Some teachers were more concerned than others about what sorts of options were available, but besides the library, assorted board games, and a briefly lasting student lounge, there was not much available for students. The teachers withdrew free time as an automatic privilege after the first few months. In practice, a number of students still roamed the halls.

Field trips at the Hill were frequent and wholeheartedly supported by the faculty. Leila emphasized the importance of relating field experiences to coursework, but Susan and Walt felt that general exposure to any new environment provided sufficient justification for community adventure. In this sense, field trips were an ambiguous learning setting: some, like the trip to an amusement park or a hockey outing, were recreational opportunities for the whole school; others, like the journeys to ethnic neighborhoods, were designed as supplements to or springboards for classroom activity. Thus, field trips were both a recreational and a learning setting, lying somewhere between free time and classrooms in terms of how closely the students were supervised.

In many ways the Hill classrooms are far from traditional. There is a variety of course content. The classes are more flexible, less regimented, and smaller than most conventional classrooms. Yet most of the teachers rely heavily on traditional kinds of exercises. The form of classroom authority is hierarchical. The teacher assumes the right to control student behavior; only occasionally do they speak in terms of some shared or reciprocal obligations for maintaining the classroom atmosphere. Collaborative relationships among students, though possible, occur irregularly. In all these respects the Hill teachers resembled conventional school instructors.

The main distinctions to be drawn between annex and conventional classrooms revolves around the concept of individualization. Students were usually pursuing different tasks at different rates. This practice, based on worksheets and booklets, avoided the familiar classroom scene of a large group plodding through the same material at a uniform rate; in addition, individualized teaching made heterogeneous grouping possible, providing an alternative to ability grouping.

Yet individualization involves certain trade-offs. First, the main variable controlled by students was rate, not content or mode of learning[2]; students were basically completing tasks prescribed and planned by teachers. In addition, the worksheet approach did not seem to encourage students to initiate and organize ideas of their own; students were cast in a passive, respondent role. (In fairness, such initiative was occasionally displayed, and teachers supported it where they found it.)

Another cost of individualization was the rarity of successful collaboration among students. Some teachers encouraged working together, but for the most part students either worked alone or consulted with each other covertly.

Moreover, it may be a myth that students proceeded at their own rate. For example, in English and social studies classes, individual seatwork alternated with large group discussions. This meant that the teachers judged when to make the transition from individual to group activity. This judgment could, in theory, honor the fastest students, the slowest students, or aim for a median. At the Hill, the teachers usually gave students ample time to complete their work, meaning that the slower students generally affected the pace of the class, leaving others with little to do.

This situation did not arise in math and science where there were few large group presentations. There the teacher was free to introduce new topics on an individual basis, although Frances, at least, expressed frustration at the repetition of giving the same instructions over and over again.

In sum, the "alternative" aspects of the Hill reside primarily in field trips and free time. We do not find in the classroom settings any profound contrast with conventional schools beyond a more informal atmosphere. The teachers have worked to individualize their classrooms within the framework of fairly conventional pedagogical styles. Further, their efforts at individualization impose certain limits at the same time as they allow students to work at their own rate. Some of these same issues run through the way learning settings are organized at the Lake.

Learning Settings at the Lake

Ben, called Mr. Gibbon by the students, lent an air of stability and evenness to the school. Low key and deliberate in manner, he described his teaching this way:

> It's probably a little bit more conservative. I feel -- I use a text a lot more than the other teachers do, I think . . . . I tend to give more homework . . . I probably take fewer field trips than the other teachers; I tend to use the library, possibly, more . . . I'd have to say that my classes are a little bit more traditional than, maybe, the other teachers.

And he expressed confidence that his approach was right for him:

> No I don't feel pressure (to change my style of teaching). This is what I feel comfortable with. For me this is the best way I can prepare these kids for ninth grade. And somebody else -- another science teacher -- might not feel this way, but this is the way I feel.

He offered a variety of courses in science: Matter, Energy, Life Science, Science Current Events, and Independent Projects.

> I have traditional types of classes with a textbook: there are laboratory exercises, there's reading to be done and questions to be answered, tests, and quizzes; and I also offer a course in current events where the kids gather information from magazines . . . Also I have a laboratory course -- little reading, lots of organization.

In addition he had courses that were less academic: a time for students to build models, for example, and a short-term course entitled "Dealing with Feelings."

He frequently took charge of some of the Lake's administrative chores -- running a loan operation for students, organizing a system for ordering submarine sandwiches, and he often led the afternoon community meetings with a firm hand[3]:

> I noticed today that the noise level seems to have increased. As you get more familiar with the school, there's more running around. This kind of behavior is not going to be tolerated . . . If you have to run, run outside. This is a school; we're trying to run classes. Tomorrow let's try a little harder. (9/12/72)

In some ways he was the antithesis of a stereotypical alternative school teacher: he felt comfortable in his role as a responsible adult authority and he taught in a fairly conventional manner. His focus was on responsibility more than freedom. He had substantial confidence in the Lake's approach to students:

> We put quite a bit of responsibility on the kids, where they're not constantly being told what to do, they're not constantly being directed. We try to make them assume their own responsibility in terms of things like getting to class on time and choosing their classes, watching the time because we have no bells. If they have free periods they're allowed to go outside, make sure they don't leave the school grounds, but come back in time for the next class. They're free to go to the library unsupervised. In a traditional school these things just aren't done.

The same theme of freedom tempered with responsibility and a gradualist approach characterized his discussion of free time:

> Well, I think that if kids learn slowly, a little bit at a time, to handle freedom in a responsible manner, that this certainly will help them in later life. The older you get and the further you go in school, the less direct pressure you have on you to get things done, and you're kind of left on your own to get these things done. The sooner you can learn to handle your free time, the better off you'll be. Not only in terms of studying but in terms of finding things to do for yourself.

He also endorses field trips whole-heartedly:

> Oh, I think they're great. I would hate to have kids for a year and just have four walls and a few books. I think that there's so much to learn from outside and actually that there's so much to learn just by seeing . . . . There's just so much to see out there that these kids have just never been exposed to, both within the community and in the greater (metropolitan) area: museums, and all kinds of manufacturing processing plants, electronics plants. All of these things I think you can learn a lot by seeing, almost a lot more than you can in a classroom. You can learn more by doing, but I think just exposure to the whole outside community is a wonderful opportunity for kids.

In class, Ben often lectured for part of a period, explaining and defining terms, e.g., outlining the steps of the scientific method, labelling the parts of a cell, or distinguishing liquid and solid measures. He expected students to master such definitions and he tested his classes more regularly than the other teachers:

> Mr. G.: What are the five steps of mitosis?
> Sam (raising his hand): Can I read them out of the book?
> Mr. G.: All right.
> (Sam reads them.)
> Pete: Do we have to know that for the test?
> Mr. G.: Yeah, but not in a great deal of detail. (undated)

If students failed the tests, they had the opportunity to make them up. Ben seemed able to separate grades as index of performance from his evaluation of a student's personal worth -- that is, personal rejection did not accompany low grades.

The questions he asked were of the fill-in-the-blank variety:

> Mr. G.: Do you know what makes a cell wall so stiff? You should remember this -- it begins with a "c." (10/72)
>
> Mr. G.: Next time we're going to have a test and it's going to be on the metric system, so let's go over that. (He points to the word "linear," written on the board) What root word do you see in it?
> Sherry: Ear.
> Mr. G.: OK, what other one?
> Sherry: Lin.
> Liz: Line. (11/72)

When not lecturing or asking questions, Ben usually had students complete simple, sometimes tedious, exercises, like measuring different objects in the room, or dividing a long strip of paper into a thousand equal parts without using a ruler. During this last exercise he commented to the observer, "It's an exercise in futility." A boy, overhearing, added, "A thousand lines! It's an exercise on your hand."

Ben's classes were organized; the atmosphere was even and controlled. He seldom lost his temper and rarely needed to carry out any threats. His authority stemmed from his position, his role as an adult and teacher. He assumed and executed that authority with the full expectation that students would comply:

> Hey, let's go. Sit down where you belong, Charlie -- over here where you belong. OK, we can stay here until you stop messing around. (10/18/72)

Students usually did as he asked; he rarely, if ever, kicked a student out of class. He did, however, follow up if a student skipped his class; he would read the names of such offenders at the school's general meeting at the end of the day and keep them after school. The emphasis in his teaching and classroom management was procedural: As long as students did not disturb others, cleaned up after their work, and turned in some product, he did not bother them. He would not object, for example, if a student read a magazine quietly, if he eventually produced some work.

For the most part, Ben expected students to work individually rather than with others. Students consulted friends informally during written exercises; but Ben neither expected nor encouraged them to do so.

Ben tended to give instructions then sit back and wait for them to be carried out. He usually did not move around the class and help students:

> If you don't understand what I've said, I suggest you go over there and read chapter one. It's all explained in there. (9/19/72)

During class activities he sat at a table in front of the room and did routine work of his own -- checking records, ordering supplies, tallying the school's orders for submarine sandwiches. He helped students who requested it and seemed sensitive to which students needed help more than others. His predominant relationship with his class was that of instructor: didactic presentations, giving out assignments, and evaluating student progress via frequent tests. His expectations for behavior were clear, and his approach to free time and field trips was positive and open, but also oriented toward common sense.

Ted ("Mr. Phil" to the students) was the oldest but most informal of the Lake teachers. He spent boundless energy going on field trips, running a small business within the school, and, frequently, just taking his class outdoors -- visiting a small park in the center of town, for example. His social studies classes were generally unplanned and spontaneous, meandering around little pockets of subject matter:

> Interviewer: How do you usually set up your classes?
> Ted: I guess I would say first that I don't set it up. And sometimes I feel very guilty about this . . . No lesson plans, no sense of a curriculum, no basic strategy or structure behind what I'm doing. It certainly isn't my style. . . . What are the goals for social studies in junior high anyway?

Many of his courses were activity-oriented rather than centered around a body of content -- Running a Business, the Park, Bicycle Repair. His general approach is both personal and pragmatic:

> If you come to my classes, what you're really learning is Mr. Phillips (laugh) -- you're not learning anything else . . . I'm no paragon of anything . . . I teach history and cooking the same way.

Personalism and pragmatism run through his views on field trips and free time too:

> Well, one reason for giving them free time is that you don't have enough for them to do all the time. Another reason for free time is for people to have choices of how they use their time . . . .
>
> I feel that we have quite a physical program. The fact that we have all this outdoor space has something to do with that. I've come to see that the idea of a program in which people are moving around and get a chance to get their muscles involved is a positive

> good at this stage . . . I'm a go and see person. I like to go and see. A lot of the stuff that's happening with me in this school is just me. It has damn little to do with any concept of education that I can find support for, necessarily, in a dogma.

Perhaps more than the other teachers, Bob hooked into the notion of the Lake as a community. He enjoyed working on spaghetti suppers, showing slides of Spy Pond activities, and spent time on a regular newsletter that went out to parents. He was fiercely protective of the Lake's interests and concerned over its future prospects.

Ted's classroom style was laissez-faire. In his more academic course, discussions simply unfolded rather than being guided:

> Mr. P.: How are these men going to persuade people to vote for them?
> Matt: Eat pizza!
> Steve: Make speeches!
> Matt: Everyone makes pledges, like "ending the war." They run into bars and say hello to the Polacks.
> Mr. P: What's an "issue"?

Although he occasionally got mad when community matters were at stake -- misusing boys' club equipment, hitting other students, he seldom disciplined students in class. He had a high tolerance for noise, and when things got out of hand, he handled the situation in a low-key fashion:

> Mr. P.: Will you listen, please!
> [The class quiets down except for one boy. Ted puts his hand on the boy's shoulder and says, quietly] I'm talking. (9/11/72)

His laissez-faire approach was even more noticeable on field trips or activity-type courses. He usually did not try to hold the focus of his students' attention; he just carried on a conversation with those students who happened to be nearby. This approach gave students a chance to voice their opinions about the course agenda:

> Mr. P.: We meet twice a week. We have to think of how we're going to spend that time. We could spend one day on the national election.
> Dick: Why don't we spend time on the local election?
> Matt: The local elections! They stink.
> Bobby: Mr. Phillips, make a survey.
> Mr. P.: I'll put that in my thinking cap and see if we can come up with something interesting. (9/18/72)

But at the same time, as Ted's last statement demonstrates, he reserved authority for himself. The students might be consulted; but the teacher decided. Within this informal style, Ted performed some traditional teacher moves. For example, he retained tight control over the end of the class period:

> OK, excused for lunch. (9/30/72)
>
> All right, class is now over. (11/10/72)

> Isabel: May we leave now?
> Mr. P.: Yes, you may leave. (9/20/72)

In short, Ted assumed the same hierarchical position that Ben did, but he carried this out in a more informal way.

Finally, it was not Ted's practice to build in small group projects or other collaborative activities. Classes consisted of spontaneous lectures, discussions, or seatwork. Bob's stance was that of a friendly, informal lecturer who genuinely enjoyed exchanging experiences with students and who built his classes around matters of personal interest. For him, learning seemed to be _unfolding_ experience rather than _planned_ experience, and his approach to courses, field trips, free time, and the community reflected that orientation.

Sally suffered the disadvantage of coming to the Lake in the middle of September, after the school year had already begun; she replaced a math teacher forced to resign after a motorcycle accident:

> It seemed like a very friendly, open place, and at times I wasn't used to the "unstructure." But, you know, I adapted, I think, and was able to establish some sort of structure in my classes. It's probably different from any structure, any class that _I_ had ever gone to as a student, but it's really fun. And I certainly haven't formalized any way of teaching yet. I'm still trying out new things, and I think I will for a long time.

In addition to coming late, she was faced with the responsibility of developing her curriculum as she went along. She also took charge of the Lake's gym program, with particular emphasis on tennis. Her math classes were held in the big room, with the consequence that she had to control the traffic and noise of students zooming into the room, perching on tables for a while, then zooming out again. ("Please don't play that game. I asked you before.")

Sally organized many of her classes on a worksheet basis:

> In what I call general math they come in and they get their papers from the day before and do any corrections that they have to, then get the next assignment . . . It's very individualized, because they're all at different levels, and I think with the small number of students, that's something we can do.

She tried to make math appealing to a wide range of students through playing bridge, courses on the stock market and computers, and a variety of games and puzzles. Except for giving instructions at the beginning of a period, she seldom addressed the class as a whole. Like Frances at the Hill, she explained problems to students individually, hopping from table to table. Aside from the various puzzles she used, most of the math work was conventional textbook fare. But she did not demand that all students work on the same topic (although most of them in practice were working on the same sheets), and she allowed them to progress at their own pace.

Perhaps more than the other teachers -- or at least more dramatically, Sally changed over the fall semester. Some initial control problems subsided as she felt her way into the school and gained confidence in what she was doing. This confidence showed itself in her increased experimentation with novel approaches to math.

Her energetic presence as a sports leader was important, and she spent much time helping to organize the inter-annex olympics and other athletic events.

She described her role in the classroom this way:

> I go around and help them. If they have a question they'll yell at me or raise their hands or something like that, and I'll help them with their sheets. Often I'll refer to pages in a book or to other sheets which explain it in a different way. Now we've got some student teachers who are extremely helpful in an individualized situation. And they'll also enlist the help of anyone who walks in the room.

Sally also made active efforts to foster collaboration among students, frequently asking them to help each other:

> Sally (to John): How are you at division? Would you help Danny? (9/20/72)
>
> Sally: Jon, would you explain to Vincent what you're doing?
> Jon: Vincent?
> Sally: Yes, Vincent. (10/20/72)
>
> Sally (to a student wandering around the room): If you have a free period would you teach Chuck base seven . . . Be patient.

Her efforts worked intermittently. Students also collaborated informally: the push to arrive at a "right answer" seemed somehow to make it more probable that students would confer with each other: a kind of "superordinate goal."[4]

Because Sally moved from student to student during class rather than exercising general surveillance, there was more opportunity for disruption. Sally generally responded by raising her voice:

> Come on, Debby, Pam. Right now! Move. (10/25/72)
>
> I would like to make an announcement. Close your books and don't talk . . . There will be no paper throwing. Help me throw away the paper on the floor. (9/26/72)

She described her disciplinary strategies this way:

> Interviewer: What will you generally reprimand kids for?
> Sally: Being disorderly or creating disorder. I won't generally get mad at somebody for not working constantly all period. I will get mad at people who are constantly walking around causing a commotion, disturbing other kids, and extremely loud noise.

In sum, Sally taught a content-oriented class in an individualized fashion. She also offered more motivational courses involving games and puzzles. She did not run many field trips, but she participated in and organized many of the school-wide activities, particularly ones with an athletic component.

Jean's English courses at the Lake included Basic English, French Cuisine, Meeting a Deadline, Exploring Whitetown, Adventure Stories, Creative Writing, and (her last period Friday special) News Discussion. These courses involved a variety of activities -- putting out the newspaper, experimenting with different recipes, and more conventional English class pastimes -- reading, writing, and discussion.

She also participated in field trips. Like Ted's, her views about field trips and free time were in part pragmatic:

> Free Time
> . . . They make their own choices about things they like to do. I don't know -- maybe we don't give them enough options, and in free time, most of the decisions come from them. But I think it's to get them learn what they like to do when they're free to choose. And also, then, just -- you know -- pacing a day or pacing a week. I mean all of us need it: we need it, they need it. . .
>
> Interviewer: What are the main reasons for giving field trips?
> Jean: We like to do 'em. . . I think each teacher decides for himself, maybe talking with students, the things he thinks he'd like to do, or would be interesting to do, and then field trips fit into the context of those courses. There are some things that are better accomplished outside the building. And also, I think it's trying to adapt the things

> that go on in school to a lot of different kinds of kids. I think there are a lot of kids who are very active physically, and getting on bikes or going for a walk or taking the transit into (the nearby city),you know, is good for them.

In her academic courses, Jean organized her content in an open-ended fashion. Generally speaking, she would enter the class with a lesson plan (or at least a starting point): "Write an editorial about long hair on boys," or reading a particular stody. Some topics were more open, as in "Meeting a Deadline," when she asked students to write a newspaper article on a subject of their choice. But even when she defined a topic in advance, she did not force students to accept it. If a student resisted a given assignment, she would be quite flexible in working out alternatives:

> Jean: I'd like you to write a short paragraph. I thought of a topic -- maybe you can think of a better one or do something on your own. (She asks them to write as if they were an animal exploring the school.) OK, does that sound like a possible topic?
> Sue: I don't like writing about animals.
> Jean: Well, you can change . . . You can write about anything you want. (9/8/72)

At other times, particularly in Basic English, Jean handed out worksheets -- grammar exercises on irregular verbs or double negatives.

> Jean: Today we're going to do something a little grungier and less fun, but I hope you find it useful. (9/18/72)

For the most part, however, Jean tried to adapt assignments and content to the interests of the students; specific content was subordinate to involvement in something:

> Interviewer: What would you say are your subject matter goals?
> Jean: Oh, god! "Subject matter goals" -- are there any? Well, I think one of the most important would be to let kids find out things that they like to do and are good at doing . . . Other than (basic skills) I'd say the goals are not so much subject goals as individual goals.

Jean's class was frequently noisy, especially if the class was relatively large and the content for the day was flexible. Her first attempts at discipline would be rhetorical questions or sarcastic comments, directed at making students quiet down and get to work:

> Do you mind if we end the math topic? (10/25/72)

> We have a problem in here because there are so many of us and the people next door, but it's possible to accommodate ourselves to that, right Pamela? (11/9/72)

Jean also phrased some disciplinary statements in terms of a teacher-student reciprocity:

> Would you let me finish my sentence and then I'll be willing to listen to yours. (undated)

If other efforts failed, Jean resorted to conventional tactics. The following excerpt illustrates a progression from reason to "force":

> (a girl starts singing loudly.)
> Jean: What was the deal we made last period? Consider that a threat. You do some work this period, you get to do what you want next period.
> (The classroom noise increases.)
> Listen a second! If you've got your own ideas you can write your own story. I thought for today --
> Voice from the rear: NO!
> Jean (continuing): Well, that's a vote of confidence -- we'd write a science fiction story. (The noise gets even louder. She gets mad:) All right, that's enough. Girls, separate yourselves right now. (Silence. Nobody moves.) Somebody has to move. (A girl changes her seat.)

More than the other Lake teachers, she tried to include the children in the planning and decision-making surrounding a course. Introducing her basic English course, she said:

> Jean: I'd like to hear from you first of all . . . What your needs are . . . Why you are taking this course.
> Tom: I gotta learn English -- you know, adjectives, adverbs?
> Jean: Adjectives, adverbs -- do you think those things are important?
> Tom: It's important to be able to answer the questions they ask in high school -- to appear smart, so they'll think you're cool.
> Jean: I get the impression you see this as sort of a game . . . What about your needs right now?
> Doug: Your mother makes you.
> Jean: How many of you were forced to take this course (Doug raises his hand.) Well, aside from Doug, the rest of us weren't forced in here.
> Al: Yes we were. We had to take one of three English courses. I wouldn't be in here if I didn't have to take English.

In this excerpt Jean tries to get students to articulate their own purposes; she wants to entertain their wishes, yet they respond by referring to the external pressures that pushed them into the course -- high school requirements, parents, the organization of the Lake's curriculum.

In conclusion Jean's system of control is a kind of hybrid: on the one hand she appeals to students' internal controls and extends opportunities for students to share in decisions; on the other hand, when such efforts seem not to be working, she employs conventional tactics deriving from her teacher role, her hierarchical position.

Jean also varied the grouping patterns in her class. Exercises and most writing assignments were done on an individual basis, but occasionally she asked students to collaborate on a story, or she had students exchange writing samples for comments. Sometimes she asked small groups of students to work on something together, usually with mixed results.

Finally, she interacted a lot with her class. She spent a good deal of energy moving about, encouraging students to find something worthwhile to do, even if it is not her own plan:

> Jean: Sammy, since you've finished that story, would you like to read the one the rest of us are reading? It's really a good one, page 158. (Sammy gets the book)
> Jean encourages Craig to read. She suggests they alternate reading paragraphs, but he declines. He doesn't get started on the story. Jean turns back to Sammy, who has already lost interest in the book. She suggests he write an article for the newspaper. She elicits a possible topic from him and he fetches a typewriter and goes off into a corner with it. Craig taps her on the shoulder and discusses the newspaper with her.) (11/7/72)

Jean tried to be a catalyst for student initiative by interacting with them frequently, pushing them, encouraging them. When students resisted or lost interest in her topics, she provided them with other ideas. As opposed to Ben's class where there is an alternating rhythm between now-the-teacher-talks, now-the-students-work, in Jean's class there is constant motion and interaction between teacher and pupil; Jean approaches students whether or not they request help.

Commentary. Both annexes relied heavily on two "alternative" learning settings: free time and field trips. At the Lake, free time did not present as much of a problem as it did at the Hill, largely because of size and space considerations. The teachers at the Lake saw free time both as a legitimate and purposeful part of the educational program and as a pragmatic way of pacing a day. There was, then, less conflict at the Lake over extending to students relatively unsupervised time.

Field trips were also an important part of both schools. As at the Hill, the social studies and English teachers used community resources somewhat more regularly than the other teachers. Some trips were run under the auspices of certain classes; others, like a trip to a beach, were recreational opportunities for the whole school. Thus, there was the same dual function of field trips at the Lake as at the Hill. There was, perhaps, slightly less emphasis on turning field trips into "learning experiences" rather than just "experiences."

With respect to the classroom settings, the Lake teachers approached things in a variety of ways: there was a broad range of subject matter. Compared to the Hill, the Lake offered credit for more non-academic activities. Styles of teaching ranged from *laissez-faire* to conventional. Some teachers interacted with students more than others. All the teachers relied on conventional disciplinary strategies, although most of them also tried to involve students in some form of decision making at the classroom level.

The Relationships between Learning Settings

The range of activities at each annex is roughly comparable. Both the Hill and the Lake have offered students free time.[5] Field trips are a prominent feature of both schools, and trips include ventures closely tied to classroom content, one-shot exposures, and recreational activities. Both schools have as part of their curriculum somewhat unusual content, yet teachers often employ conventional teaching devices -- rote exercises or keeping a student after school, for example.

At both schools the range of learning settings represents a three-dimensional continuum of hierarchy, formality, and achievement press. Free time, at one end of the continuum, is relatively unsupervised, informal, with no required task to accomplish. The classroom settings, on the other hand, are much closer to the conventional school forms: the teachers are in direct charge (or when they aren't, they are trying to be), procedures are more explicit and formal, there is pressure to do something. The crunch comes in class. Field trips occupy a middle position on this continuum -- the hierarchy is there (in the person of the teacher), but the activity is for the most part informal, with ambiguous achievement press.

The "poles" of this continuum represent a contrast in the demands each school places on its students. The situational constraints of free time differ from classrooms. We can interpret the contrast, however, in a number of ways.

One interpretation argues that the reduced formality of field trips and free time acts as a cushion for more routine classwork. The more pleasant, less coercive learning settings make the classroom more tolerable for students.

A second view holds that there is a dissonance between learning settings: students are confused by conflicting signals. The freedom of field trips and free time conflicts with the more conventional constraints of the classroom. These two views are pursued in the next chapters.

No school, presumably, would find it desirable to establish a monolithic environment. A variety of learning settings is surely welcome. Probably it is important to seek ways of diversifying the annex learning settings even further. The issue at stake here is the way students make sense out of that range. Do they travel through the contrasting settings with ease as the "cushion" view suggests or are they paralyzed by the contrasts, as the dissonance view suggests?

The next chapter introduces the eighth grade boys at each annex and identifies the different sets of assumptions they bring to the schools. Each of the interpretations sketched above makes sense for different types of students. The students themselves have varying tolerances for ranges of learning settings, and their responses, more than any analysis of the annex schools' organizational structure, indicates the importance of designing learning environments in terms of a balance of different kinds of settings, not as a reassertion of a conventional approach nor as a reaction against that approach in the name of a utopian alternative.

Footnotes to Chapter V

[1] Willard Waller, The Sociology of Teaching (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), p. 385.

[2] See Miriam Bar-Yam, The Interaction of Instructional Strategies with Students' Characteristics. Monograph No. 14 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for Research and Development on Educational Differences, 1969).

[3] I do not mean to suggest that Ben was 'the leader' of the Lake. Administrative chores and leadership functions seemed shared by all.

[4] See Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif, Reference Groups (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

[5] The Hill faculty was moving toward the elimination of free time as a privilege; the Lake teachers were moving toward a reduction in the scope of that privilege.

CHAPTER VI

THE EIGHTH GRADE BOYS: EXPECTATIONS

The annex students have their own ideas about education. In addition to asking them general questions like "What is the main point of going to school?" and "What are you getting out of school right now?" I interviewed students about their particular responses to field trips, free time, and specific classroom experiences -- the whole range of learning settings. I wanted to find out what they felt it was important to learn and how they defined the limits of legitimate learning activities: in short, what they expect of school.

In this chapter I identify and elaborate five modal patterns of student responses. These five patterns represent distinct approaches to school, derived from my interviews with the eighth grade boys at the Hill. After discussing each of these patterns in depth, I turn more briefly to the smaller, less complex world of the Lake, describing the ten eighth grade boys there in terms of the categories generated by the Hill interviews.

I interviewed all the eighth grade boys at both schools. This choice of a sample both raised and eliminated certain problems. It limited my study; I cannot, for example, generalize any findings to girls. I opted for a more in-depth exploration of one group over a more superficial investigation of both groups. I focused on boys because I felt that boys probably had expectations that were more discrepant with alternative school ideals; at the junior high age, I hypothesized, they probably relied more on external controls than did girls, hence greater "freedom" might pose greater problems for them in deciding how to act, what to do.

In addition to these methodological concerns, I faced certain practical problems. Many students considered an interview something of a treat, particularly if it provided an escape from some teacher or course. At the Lake, a group of girls especially resented being excluded from the interviews; I defended my choice (which was, after all, somewhat arbitrary) again and again, but failed to assuage anybody. Faced with a newspaper article that labelled me as a "male chauvinist pig," I finally compromised and offered a short mini-course called "Listening" that was available only to girls.

The interviews -- thirty-seven in all -- ranged from roughly thirty to ninety minutes. (See Appendix 4 for the interview schedule.) Four graduate students helped conduct the interviews. The questions began with general inquiries about "the main point of school," occupational aspirations and expectations, and then focused more narrowly on the students' previous and present school experience -- what they liked most and least; why they came to an annex school; how they saw the organization of peer groups; how they responded to specific practices; how they acted in class; what they thought the conventional high school would be like.

Student responses varied widely. Some responded monosyllabically; others reeled off anecdote after anecdote. Many students expressed highly differentiated, sophisticated views on school and the future; others barely knew what to say and ended their responses with question marks, wondering if they had said the right thing. In general the interviews fascinated me, providing the richest data of the study.

General Responses

Clearly and overwhelmingly, the eighth grade boys at both annexes say that the principal value of school resides in its capacity to bring jobs and money in the future. Their basic orientation is instrumental:

> Interviewer: What's the main point of going to school?
> Dennis: Well, to learn. So you'll be able to be smart and, if you want, to get a good job when you get older, you know. Because you have to get a good education if you want to get a good job in this world.
>
> Al: To learn -- so you won't be a dumb-bum, going around grubbing money.
>
> Pat: To learn something -- to learn stuff. The way society's, you know, built up, if you don't go to school you just don't get a job.

> Turner: To learn something. Because people who have learned things, when you go for a job, people ask you if you've learned something, and if you have a college degree, and stuff like that. So they'll hire people with college degrees instead of people who don't have them.

Money comes up as the chief reason for wanting a certain job:

> Interviewer: What would you like to be when you grow up?
> Al: A commercial airplane pilot.
> I: Why would you like to do that?
> A: There's good money in it . . .
> I: Do you think you really will do that?
> A: I don't know. I figure if I really, really put my mind to it I can be an airplane pilot. When I was a little kid I used to go around with my little toy gun and say, "I'm going to be a soldier," you know. Then I'd pick up a little pistol and say I was going to be a cop, and then put on a little hat and say, a fireman. Those days are all gone. Firemen, police -- they don't make very good money.

Very few of the boys interviewed suggested non-utilitarian reasons for going to school, and only a small number saw jobs in other than material terms touched with a streak of glamor.

With some variation, most of the boys liked the annex schools. Although they raised many objections to specific aspects of school -- individual teachers, courses, or policies ("like not having any lunch"), the vast majority preferred the annex schools to their conventional counterparts. For them the contrasts between the conventional school and the annexes were substantial:

> Alfonso: There's much more freedom than any other school.
> Interviewer: Do you think you learn more?
> A: Yeah. You learn more because you have more freedom . . . They'll let you do your work the way you want to at your own scheduled time . . . You're not pushed; you're not shoved against the wall and told to "Do this now."

> Craig: It's easy to learn. Instead of "Hey, you -- get over there," it's, you know, "Would you please come over here?" They don't force anybody.

The boys generally enjoyed the "nice" teachers, the opportunity to move around, go on field trips, and choose courses:

> Dennis: Well, I like the teachers, most of them, and I like the fact that we have, like, open periods . . . In the regular junior highs, they just tell you where to go, they tell you what to do, but in this program you make up your own schedule, and you pick your own courses . . . .

Within this positive framework there was considerable variety. Boys attributed a wide range of purposes to the annex schools and they cited many different reasons for coming to the Hill or the Lake in the first place. This variety provides the basis for the patterns discussed below.

Background Characteristics

The annex eighth grade boys are, in the main, middle class and slightly above average in their IQ scores. The average IQ across both schools is 111; well over half of the boys are either "middle" or "high" in their status ranking, as measured by a standard classification of their father's occupation (see Fig. 3 below). Such a measure is crude in some respects, but it seemed adequate for the purposes of the present study.

FIGURE 3

Classification of Occupations

1. Unskilled Laborer
2. Semiskilled Laborer
3. Skilled Laborer
4. Lesser white-collar worker
5. Small business owner, manager, and salesman
6. Semi-professional and public administrator
7. Business Agent and Manager
8. Professional
9. Large business Owner and Official

From R. Turner, The Social Context of Ambition
(San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964)

Figures 4 and 5 present this information in summary form.

FIGURE 4

Eighth Grade Boys at the Hill, by IQ, Father's Occupation, and Status Ranking

	IQ*	Father's Occupation	Status Ranking**
Rennie	91	Owner, small business	5
Jerry	121	Lab technician	6
Jimmy	87	TV repair	3
Pat	100	District sales manager	6
Jack	103	Electrical inspector	3
Alfonso	108	Runway superintendent	6
Richard	125	Engineer	8
Raymond	104	Owner, small business	5
Dennis	104	Pediatrician	8
Mark	114	Medical sales	6
Norm	130	Owner, small business	5
Clark	111	Store manager	5
Ernest	129	Postal supervisor	6
Phil	109	Printer	3
Hector	100	Clerk	4
George	93	Oil delivery	2
Jon	***	Engineer	8
Fred	108	Salesman	5
Stan	***	****	2
Tom	118	Judge	8
Cliff	134	Equipment Operator	2
Joseph	112	Engineer	8
Sidney	143	Physicist	8
Martin	121	Doctor	8
Turner	125	Personnel administrator	7
Ronald	129	Architect	6
Carl	103	Insurance adjustor	4
Total = 27	Mean IQ = 113		

* IQ score based on Otis-Lennon test administered 1970.

**Status Ranking based on category scheme devised by R. Turner, The Social Context of Ambition (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964).

*** No score available.

****Boy lives with mother, who is a waitress.

FIGURE 5

Eighth Grade Boys at the Lake, by IQ and Father's Occupation

	IQ*	Father's Occupation	Status Ranking**
Mel	115	Vocational Counselor	6
Sam	116	Accountant	7
Chuck	101	Insurance Salesman	5
Pete	123	Salesman	5
Tim	90	Salesman	5
Craig	68***	State	6
Al	111	Professor	8
Don	125	Professor	5
Michael	98	Salesman	5
Steve	116	Lawyer	8

* IQ scores based on Otis-Lennon test administered in 1970.

** Status Ranking based on category scheme devised by R. Turner, The Social Context of Ambition (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964).

*** F was found to have brain damage, and the abnormally low IQ was thrown out of further calculations. With such a small population (n=10), I felt the score would have skewed the general picture out of proportion. For example, the average IQ of the Lake eighth grade boys is 106 if the 68 is included; if excluded, the mean rises to 110.

We can sharpen the differences between the two schools if we break down the background information into categories, as in Figures 6 and 7. Looking at the zeros in both figures, we can say that the Hill's population of eighth grade boys is more diverse both in terms of IQ scores and status origins. The Lake, in contrast, is much more homogeneous: No boys come from the lowest level of status; and none belong to the upper two levels of IQ scores. The Lake has a slightly higher social class composition than the Hill, and a slightly (statistically non-significant) lower average IQ (the Hill's mean IQ is 113;

the Lake is 110). The general picture is that of a larger, scattered, heterogeneous Hill population compared to a smaller, somewhat narrower group at the Lake.

These contrasts in background characteristics led me to devote more attention to the Hill students, using that group as a basis for the five patterns discussed below.

FIGURE 6

IQ Scores of Eighth Grade Boys, by School

IQ Score	Frequencies The Hill	 The Lake
86-95	3	1
96-105	6	2
106-115	6	2
116-125	5	4
126-135	4	0
136-145	1	0
Totals	25	9

* Scores unavailable for two Hill students. One Lake boy's score falls below the range at 68.

FIGURE 7

Status Origins of Eighth Grade Boys, by School

Rank	Frequencies The Hill	 The Lake
1-3	6	0
4-6	13	6
7-9	8	4
Total	27	10

In addition to IQ scores and father's occupation, three other concepts provided important ways of distinguishing different response patterns: mobility aspirations, time orientation, and fate control.

Mobility. According to the Turner classification scheme, none of the Hill boys had fathers who held jobs at the extremes -- there were neither unskilled laborers nor bank presidents among them. This meant that the boys could, in their future occupation, either stay at the same occupational level as their father, "improve" upon that level, or be downwardly mobile. Although some students had no clear picture of what they might like to do in the future, most of them had some idea of what job they would like. I ranked their occupational aspirations, again using the Turner scheme, and compared their aspirations with their fathers' occupations, thus arriving at an index of the boys' mobility aspirations.

Students at this age often cling to probably unrealistic fantasies about future occupations ("Be a football player and make TV commercials") and many others simply wished to follow in their fathers' footsteps, sometimes a way of forestalling a future decision of one's own. With these cautions in mind, I developed four general categories of mobility aspirations.

1. Upwardly Mobile. The boys in this group wanted jobs ranking higher than their fathers' occupations. For example, a boy whose father sold plumbing equipment wished to become a lawyer.

2. Downwardly Mobile. These boys wanted jobs at a lower status level than their fathers' occupations. For example, a boy whose father was an accountant wanted to be a carpenter.
3. Stable Highs. These boys wanted jobs at the same status level as their fathers'. For instance, a boy whose father was an architect also wanted to be an architect. The "high" designation included the semi-professional and professional categories (groups 6-9 on the scale).
4. Stable Lows. Boys in this group had relatively low status origins but did not aspire to higher ranking jobs. For example, one boy whose father was a printer also wanted to be a printer. The "low" designation refers to occupations ranging from 1 to 5 on the Turner scale.

Time Orientation. Some students had more difficulty than others seeing the future as really coming. They were embedded in the unfolding present; the future was some remote fantasyland. Students embedded in the present often maintained contradictions in their thinking: a boy might see the purpose of schooling as preparation for a job; he might have high aspirations, but all that would be for the future; as far as the present was concerned, he would prefer to fool around. His perceptions about the purpose of schooling and his present preferences were inconsistent.

> Interviewer: What would you say is the main point of going to school?
> Raymond: So you have a good education for when you get older. If you don't have an education you can't get a job and you can't earn any money.
> I: Would you go to school if you didn't have to go?
> R: Most of the time I wouldn't go. I'd rather go outside and fool around -- banging light bulbs, playing football, hockey.

Most of the students had a future, rather than embedded time orientation: they articulated a future purpose for schooling and wanted to work toward that purpose in the present.

Fate Control. Some students felt little control over what happened to them, either in the present or the future. Although they might express goals for themselves, they doubted that they could ever achieve those goals: their aspirations and expectations diverged.[1] They had, in this respect, a low sense of fate control.

> Interviewer: What would you like to do when you grow up?
> Phil: I don't know for sure -- maybe a truck driver or something like that . . .
> I: Do you think you'll be able to do that if you want to?
> P: I doubt it. I'll probably be working with my dad or somebody.

> Interviewer: Do you have any idea what you actually will be doing when you grow up?
> Stan: I'm thinkin' about being a policeman.
> I: Uh huh. And do you think you'll be able to do that if you want?
> S: I don't know -- I got picked up a couple of times, so it cuts down my chances.

Other students had a high sense of fate control; they felt a confidence in their ability to reach certain goals; their expectations matched their aspirations:

> Ernest: Well, I want to be an astronaut scientist . . .
> Interviewer: Do you think you'll be able to do that?
> E: Yeah.
> I: How come?
> E: I think I've been doing pretty good in school and I think I'll be able to meet the requirements.

> Interviewer: What would you like to do when you grow up?
> Alfonso: Play baseball, sports . . .
> I: Do you think you'll be able to do that?
> A: Yeah, I think I can. I know I can play better than a lot of kids I know . . .

Students with high fate control expected to adapt successfully to the rather different environment of the high school, despite some concerns. Low fate control students, on the other hand, expressed serious doubts that they would be able to manage it; some feared "staying back."

In sum, I used five "classic" variables to help explain the different response patterns at the Hill: IQ, status origins, mobility, time orientation, and fate control. But even together, these five variables do not explain everything, nor were they the principal way of defining the patterns. Instead I used them in conjunction with a content analysis of the interview items. The different response patterns come primarily from what the students said about the main purpose of schooling, the way the Hill worked for them, why they decided to come to the Hill, what purposes they attributed to it, and their expectations for next year in high school. Some students were difficult to classify. After all, I had twenty-seven Hill students; they all had to go somewhere. I imagined myself as a cowboy, roping a calf and pulling it into a corral, even if the calf itself obstinately refused to cooperate. I came up with five such "corrals" at the Hill summarized below in Figure 8.

FIGURE 8

Summary of Five Response Patterns at the Hill

Pattern I: "Immersed"	Low fate control; embedded or immersed in current setting; undifferentiated responses; unable to envision future except as fantasy; pictures self as a victim of external controls; fear of staying back.
Pattern II: "Negative"	Negative or conflicted about Hill experience; also low fate control -- powerful external forces. Focus on behavioral constraints. "Fooling around" as a purpose of school. More verbal than I. Cynical about the Hill -- "false promise" view.
Pattern III: "Contented Conventionals"	Positive view toward schooling in general and the Hill in particular. Any criticisms compartmentalized. Some reservations about high school, but generally confident about the future. Instrumental orientation to school.
Pattern IV: "Conventional Strivers"	Highly mobile, high academic orientation; understands but rejects ideology of annex schools. Fear of future difficulties in school. Private school as probable. Highly critical of the Hill's lack of strictness. Not learning anything at present.
Pattern V: "Integrated Academics"	Strong academic orientation but sees present annex experience as productive; confident of future success; complex reasoning.

Pattern I: "Immersed"[2]

> Stan: I don't know -- I just don't like working.
> I just like to rest a while.

Four boys fall into this category: Raymond, Hector, George, and Stan. Their IQ's average 100; they represent the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum as defined by "status origins." They are "stable lows" in terms of mobility aspirations.

These boys see school as an obstacle course -- a difficult one, and a principal reason why they like the Hill is that there are fewer academic hurdles:

> George: They give you more work, but they don't make you do it.
> Raymond: The junior high school's hard -- that's why I came here.
> Hector: It isn't so hard.

For them, school is an external pressure; none of them would attend if school were voluntary.

These four boys have quite passive orientations to their surroundings. First, they are embedded in their current situation, with little capacity to place it in any time perspective -- the future is remote and far away; they focus on the immediate set of hurdles:

> Interviewer: Do you ever think about quitting?
> Stan: High school? I don't know -- I haven't gotten there yet (laugh).

In addition, Raymond and George express the fear they won't be promoted to the ninth grade; in their view, the school hierarchy determines their fate.

A second aspect of their "passivity" is found in the reasons they give for coming to the Hill. George came because it was the closest to his home; the other three came as a result of real external pressures:

> Raymond: My mother wanted me to go . . . I really didn't want to.

> Interviewer: OK, how come you came to the Hill?
> Stan: I was put here.
> I: Oh yeah?
> S: Yeah. I had some kinda test at the East and they just stuck me here.

Hector came because the conventional school principal placed him there, telling him "they needed more kids and everything."

These boys are not necessarily negative toward the Hill. George says the Hill is the "best school (he's) been to yet." The main point is that this group seldom steps outside immediate experience. They have difficulty imagining what a perfect school would be like; they don't know why the teachers at the Hill do what they do or why they came to the Hill:

> George: They just got picked.

Many of this group's interview responses were short and undifferentiated; they struggled for answers part of the time, putting the interviewer into a stance of "pulling teeth":

> Interviewer: Would you go to school if you didn't have to?
> George: No (pause).
> I: Why wouldn't you go?
> G: I don't like school. (pause)
> I: How come you don't like school?
> G: I don't know, really.

Finally, their statements were, at different points, often self-contradictory: their thoughts about the Hill seemed fragmented and in some respects inconsistent. The chief type of inconsistency was the argument that (1) school is a place to learn, (2) teachers at most schools are strict, therefore (3) if the teachers aren't strict, I can't be learning.

This false syllogism is one that has its echoes throughout all five patterns (especially with the "Conventional Strivers"). But the "immersed" students really didn't have difficulty maintaining the contradiction; the two notions -- school should be strict, like nice teachers -- simply coexisted: Here is the most glaring example:

> _Interviewer_: What are the teachers here like.
> _Raymond_: Nice.
> _I_: (laugh) What makes a teacher nice?
> _R_: When they don't know how to handle a class then you get to fool around . . . I don't like 'em.
>
> . . . .
>
> _Interviewer_: What do you like most about this school?
> _R_: Nothing -- I don't like it . . .
> _I_: Do you think the difference between this school and the East helps or hurts you?
> _R_: This school makes me happy. We can run around and everything.

In sum, the "immersed" students in Pattern I are locked into the present, with little way of stepping aside and evaluating where they have been, where they are headed, or how school might become anything but a set of demands to meet.

Pattern II: "Negatives"

A second group of four boys, also averaging an IQ of 100, takes a somewhat more active, negative posture toward school. Their negative judgment is global, sweeping across elementary school in the past, high school in the future, and, with some qualifications, the Hill in the present. The four boys -- Rennie, Jimmy, Phil, and Joseph -- have a split view about the main purpose of school: yes, it prepares people for jobs, but it also provides an opportunity to "make trouble" or fool around:

> Interviewer: What's the main point of going to school?
> Rennie: To learn -- and to fool around and have fun.
>
> Joseph: Learning something, I guess. Learning something and causing trouble.
> Interviewer: Why are those things important?
> J: I don't know -- so you can get a job and cause more trouble when you get older.

Like the "immersed" boys of Pattern I, these four tend to see school as an external force to contend with, rather than a potential source of support. The compulsory nature of school is salient:

> Interviewer: What do you like most about this school?
> Joseph: I don't know -- being able to get out of school at the end of the day.
> I: What's the worst thing about this place?
> J: Going to school.

For Rennie, the reduced formality and achievement of the Hill makes it less unpleasant -- "the teachers are nice"; but for Jimmy, Phil, and Joseph, this looser atmosphere only exacerbates their negative disposition toward school:

> Phil: I don't think we learn as much here. No one does any work here.

> Jimmy: I don't think I'm learning that much.
> Interviewer: Uh huh.
> J: And I don't learn around here. I think I would have learned more at the West.
> I: Oh yeah? Why is that? What about the West would have made you learn more?
> J: Like in social studies, all you do is play monopoly -- that doesn't teach you anything. English -- that's a waste.

In brief, whereas the "immersed" boys do not step back and assess their experience, the "negative" students make judgments about the way school helps or hurts them. "Immersed" boys, with their low fate control and embeddedness in the present, accept their surroundings; "negative" boys, more verbal, express more cynical sentiments:

> Interviewer: What's the main point of going to school?
> Phil: To learn.
> I: Why is it important to learn?
> P: Cause your father and mother want you out of the way for the rest of the day.

Rennie, Phil, and Joseph feel that the Hill extended unfulfilled campaign promises. They feel that the teachers have somehow cheated them; that the school is not as good as the teachers said it would be.

> Interviewer: What did you think it would be like before you came here?
> Joseph: Nice. But I was surprised because it's a big shit can.
>
> Rennie: I heard it was an outdoor-classroom without walls or something like that. It isn't. (laugh) ... The only reason they're doing this is overcrowding in all the other schools . . . Before They said that on the field trips you'd learn the same stuff people learn inside the classroom with a piece of paper. They don't do that any more. (laugh) We go on a field trip: "Hey, that was fun. OK, let's go back and do our work." We don't write up reports on the field trips or anything like they said you would . . . It's dumb.
> Interviewer: Why is it dumb?
> R: They lied.

When these boys do express positive feelings about the Hill, they talk in terms of release -- the things you can get away with: it's easier to skip class, "We can weasel our way out of anything." For the most part, however, they see their present school experience as largely useless. Although some of them admit that the Hill has some redeeming features, all four see the Hill -- and school in general -- as an unwelcome intrusion into their lives.

Pattern III: "Contented Conventionals"

"You can learn more because you have more freedom."

Students in this category have a predominantly positive attitude toward school in general and the Hill in particular. They like the Hill, but vary in their perceptions of its effectiveness and its educational rationale.

Twelve boys fall into Pattern III: Jerry, Pat, Jack, Alfonso, Richard, Dennis, Clark, Jon, Fred, Cliff, Ronald, and Carl. Their average IQ is 114, with scores ranging from 103 to 134. They are diverse in many ways, but united in their faith in school as preparation for good jobs in the future. This pattern constitutes the "modal" set of expectations and opinions among the eighth grade boys at the Hill.

These "contented conventionals" are generally stable in their mobility aspirations. Their fathers' occupations are concentrated at the upper end of the scale, with only two of the twelve falling below the white-collar range. Most of the boys are "high stables." Three boys come from professional families but do not necessarily want high-status jobs for themselves. For example, Dennis's father is a pediatrician, but Dennis elaborates his own plans in a "downwardly mobile" fashion,[3] conflicted though he is:

> Interviewer: What sort of job would you like to have.
> Dennis: Well, something mechanical. Something I can do with my hands, you know. I don't just like paperwork; I like to do something, you know.
> I: What sort of things?
> D: I don't know . . . Like, we went to a car factory -- GM assembly plant, and I liked what they did there, but it's, you know, a non stable job if you go there. One time they had 150 guys laid off. So that isn't stable. If I had a job I'd like to be stable, you know, and something interesting.
> I: How about college?
> D: College? You mean you want to know if I'm going to go to college?
> I: Yeah. Does that fit into your future plans?
> D: Yeah, I plan to go to college.
> I: Any particular reason why?
> D: Why I want to go to college?
> I: Yeah.
> D: As I said earlier, to get a good education so I'll be able to get a good job, you know, because, you know, if you don't have a good education, you can't get a good job. Like people who don't have good jobs probably aren't as smart as people who have better jobs, anyway.

In contrast with the "immersed" and "negative" boys, the "contented conventionals" would attend school even if it were noncompulsory:

> Interviewer: What's the main point of going to school?
> Jerry: To learn stuff -- to get a job -- what else?
> I: Why is it important to learn stuff?
> J: I used to go to school because my father made me, but now I don't.
> I: How come?
> J: I don't know -- I didn't want to be a dummy.

All twelve were mostly positive toward their elementary school experience, even if that school was more regimented than the annex setting.

> Alfonso: It was a very traditional school: I didn't mind that. I didn't mind calling the teachers "Mr." and "Mrs." . . . Most of the teachers were nice there. It was an all-right school -- you know, basic school.

> Richard: Mostly the teachers were a bunch of old bats. They were strict, except they don't whip you or anything. They're nice. Except they don't let you run around; they don't give you much freedom, but you got to do fun stuff.

Within this positive approach to school, there is considerable variation. For example, the boys cite many different reasons for coming to the Hill: some wanted to "try it out," others came because it was closer to home than the regular junior high, still others liked its small size. Although there are hints of wanting to escape the conventional school setting, there is no wholesale rejection of regular school. They think of the Hill as a "better" school rather than an "alternative" school.

For the most part, then, these twelve boys find practical or nonideological reasons for the existence of the Hill:

> Interviewer: Why do you think the teachers wanted to teach here instead of at a regular school?
> Jon: . . . It's just different and they don't have to put up with a lot of kids. You can get to know the students more better.
> I: What's the main point of this school, would you say?
> J: This school -- it was just made because the other schools around here were too crowded.
> I: Are there any other reasons for it?
> J: No.

> Clark: Frances (the math teacher) hated being mean to the kids (at the conventional school), so she came here so she could teache her own way.
> I: What's the main point of the Hill?
> C: To try to make the kid -- to try to teach him that it's fun to go to school and it's fun to learn different things.

Most of these boys criticize certain aspects of the Hill, and their criticism takes one of two forms -- a content critique (i.e., they're not being prepared well enough for high school) or a structural critique (i.e., that the school isn't organized well enough). Some students relate the two, saying, for example, that the school's freedom inhibits their learning. What stands out about these criticisms, however, and what is common to both varieties is that they are compartmentalized: the criticisms are real and they are voiced, but they neither overwhelm nor interfere with the students' basically positive approach to the Hill.

> Interviewer: Does the difference (between the Hill and the conventional school) help?
> Cliff: Well, I didn't learn anything the first year, but you can learn a lot in this school if you want to, and like at (elementary school) you just learned if you wanted to or not.
> I: Is this school better?
> C: Yeah.
> I: Does this school hurt you in any way?
> C: Just that it's a little bit harder to work sometime; in a couple of classes it's noisy.

The forms of this criticism and its compartmentalization are best seen in the students' expectations about high school. Some of them say they will miss the freedom, others worry about the future work load, but all of them feel that after a period of difficulty they will be able to cope with the situation. Four boys focus on homework as the principal obstacle ahead of them:

> Ronald: It's probably going to be a lot different. Like, we don't have much homework. We'll probably get a lot of homework next year. We won't be used to it, you know?
> Interviewer: Do you think it'll be hard for you?
> R: I don't know. It might be hard for the first half of the term. After that, I think I should adjust. It wouldn't be that hard. You have a lot of friends . . . .
>
> Interviewer: Are you going to Whitetown High next year?
> Richard: I don't know, because they might have a new program next year.
> I: What if they don't?
> R: Then I'm in trouble, 'cause I'll have to adjust to -- you know, all that stuff.
> I: What stuff?
> R: Strictness, and you know, doing your homework on time and stuff like that -- or doing homework, period, really.
> I: Are you looking forward to anything?
> R: Are you kidding? I don't want to go to high school . . .
> I: Do you think it will be hard for you?
> R: It'll be hard the first couple of days . . . .
>
> Interviewer: Do you think Whitetown High is going to be different from this?
> Clark: Yes, because it's not going to be free like this is. We're going to have to, you know, get homework and sit in a special seat, and get the same type of work every day, every year . . . For the first month or two it's going to be hard, but I think I'll get used to it.

The "contented conventionals," then, have scattered reasons for coming to the Hill, and they respond to different aspects of that experience, some focusing on content, others on structure. They see the Hill as a pleasant atmosphere in which to carry out the conventional purposes of education; they recognize but do not emphasize issues like "freedom." All of them have some reservations, especially with respect to high school, but they also have a fair degree of confidence that they will be able to surmount any "initial" problems.

Pattern IV: "Conventional Strivers"

> Well, I'd say to get a job job you need a good education. That's what everybody says, but I'd stick by that. You might think that's a lot of baloney, but I think it is important.

Four students, for want of a better label, could be called conventional strivers. They have high occupational aspirations, high fate control, and see the looseness of the Hill as a threat to their ambitions. For them, mastering knowledge is the primary ingredient of school.

The boys in this group are Norm, Ernest, Martin, and Turner. Their mean IQ is 126. Their fathers hold high-ranking jobs; all of them except Martin are upwardly mobile in their aspirations; he is a "high stable."

Like most of the Hill boys, these students see job preparation as the most important point of school, but they also feel that the Hill does not help them toward their future ambitions. For them, school "right now" is tangential to their main purposes:

> Interviewer: What would you say you are getting out of school right now?
> Turner: Nothing. Nothing right now as far as learning stuff goes. As far as I can see I don't get anything out of this, as far as learning goes.
> I: What do you get out of it?
> T: Well, it's a fun school. There's always something going on -- jokes and stuff like that. Kids are always fooling. It's fun, but you don't learn anything.

In large measure, these boys have polarized present enjoyment and future success; they conclude they cannot be learning unless the environment is tightly controlled:

> Ernest: So if it was a little more strict I'd probably get right down to work and get a lot done.

These students experience a great contrast between their elementary schools and the Hill. Two of the four boys had attended an "academically talented" program for their last year of elementary school, and the less stringent academic pressures of the Hill are noticeable:

> Ernest: (Elementary school teachers were) kind of strict, you know, but you sit right down and learn, you know. You don't fool around. That's one good thing about it. In this school I'd say you get a little too much freedom and so, you know, you can slack off in your work . . . .

None of the four students came to the Hill for substantive reasons -- reasons having to do with the quality of the school. Instead they came because it was closer, because their friends were attending, or because their parents chose it for them.

> Martin: I went to the East for, like, two weeks before I came here. And there, you know, it was really strict. It wasn't the strictness that got to me; it was so far. It took me forty-five minutes to get there . . . Most of my friends were here and they said how good it was so I came over, but I found out last year it wasn't that good. This year it's better.

> Interviewer: What was the main reason you came here?
> Turner: Well, I don't know. My mother picked it . . . And I think she picked the Hill because it was closest to where we live . . . .

Similarly, what these students like most is "peripheral" aspects of the Hill -- the other students, its proximity, rather than any aspect of the program.

The "conventional strivers" are acquainted with some of the ideas behind the Hill, and they use these ideas when they speak --

but they reject them in favor of a more conservative approach. For example, they feel they would be learning more at the regular school:

> Martin: If this school were like the East I'd like it better at this location . . . I don't think I'm being prepared for high school next year. Because high school is more like the East and I'll have to readjust and everything. And it'll be sort of tough.

> Interviewer: Do you think you learn more at the East than you do here?
> Turner: Uh, I think I might. They probably make you learn it. They make you learn it and they make you remember it. You might not want to, but for sure they'd make you. Now at this school it's the opposite: they try and get you something you want, or they do something to make an image and they think, "Well, the kids'll love this. Let's do this." So the kids might not love it, and the kids don't remember it, and it does no good when you go for high school or anything like that.

Both quotations illustrate the perceived discrepancy between school now and school next year, and just as the elementary school/Hill contrast seemed great for this group, so did the prospects for next year seem at odds with the present: All four intend to go to private schools next year, where the achievement press would clearly be greater and more explicit.

> Turner: I don't know. I guess two year's vacation from school is long enough, if you got to go to college. This partially might have been my parents' choice a little . . . I guess Whitetown Catholic is better than Whitetown High academically, and that might be a reason.

> Interviewer: Where are you going to school next year?
> Ernest: I might be going to Whitetown Catholic . . .
> I: What do you think that'll be like?
> E: A lot harder than this year. I'd say it's like the regular junior highs. They crack down like . . . I'd say I'll learn pretty much and I'll enjoy learning.
> I: In a way you're looking forward to more pressure?
> E: Yeah.

All of the boys feel the transition to a stricter school will be a difficult one, and they express concern over the coming change in their lives.

In sum, these four boys have a strong academic orientation, reinforced by their past and future experiences. To them, the Hill doesn't fit in to their idea of what school should be about. They understand some of the guiding ideas of the school but find them inappropriate, ineffective, or invalid. One boy in particular, Turner, almost caricatures an attack on the school's "openness." In response after response he found fault with the teachers' attempts to make the school in an open "image":

> Interviewer: What's the worst thing about this school?
>
> Turner: Oh, I don't know. I guess the teachers trying to, uh, prove something -- that it isn't really an overcrowding problem and that this is some new type of experiment in open learning and all that stuff. And they try and prove this, but they believe it, and I don't think that's what it is.
>
> I: What do you mean?
>
> T: Well, this is just an overcrowding problem, and that's why this school is here. But the teachers seem to think that they put this here for open classroom type stuff and things like that. . . They've said uh, how this is a better opportunity than the Junior High East but I don't think any of the kids here -- few of the kids here have been to the Junior High East so they don't really know how it is . . .
>
> I: Why is that the worst thing?
>
> T: Well, I don't know. The thing is, I don't think it's true. They're trying to make an image so that the people won't get angry about it: "How did we get caught in an overcrowding problem?" The people probably wouldn't even believe it. So, they need to say that this is a new experiment in how we're going to teach kids. And they say that, and I think some of the teachers believe it, but I don't think that's what it is.

In this view, the teachers' efforts to create an alternative learning environment are inconsistent with the "conventional strivers'" own goals and expectations. It is here that the discrepancy between perceived teacher demands and student expectations is most pronounced and explicit. This should not have surprised me, but it did: I had assumed that this kind of discrepancy was largely a result of social class background -- that students with lower socioeconomic backgrounds would find the annex setting most incongruous with their own expectations. This hypothesis does, in fact, hold true in some cases; but the "conventional strivers" are from high status backgrounds. In their eyes the annex setting challenges their ideas about schooling and threatens their upward mobility.

Pattern V: "Integrated Academics"

"To learn -- and become more independent and responsible"

Three Hill boys -- Mark, Tom, and Sidney are strongly academic in their orientation; they reason in a quite sophisticated manner. But, unlike the "conventional strivers," they see their present schooling in a positive way, consistent with their future aspirations. They have a good deal of confidence in their own futures. Their interview responses were differentiated and well articulated. They saw and discussed the complexity of different issues. The average IQ of this group is 125; all three were "stable highs" in terms of mobility aspirations.

The distinguishing characteristic of this group is that they attribute multiple purposes to education. They cite "main points" other than vocational preparation or future profit:

> Mark: To learn and become more independent and responsible.
>
> Tom: To learn -- learn about things, learn about life. So when you grow up you won't be -- um -- not with it. You learn about all social things in school; you learn all your basis for college.
>
> Sidney: To learn things . . . When you grow up if you don't know much you can't really do anything . . . Part of a school like this -- it's partly socializing, sort of, and you learn different things. You learn about people and you learn what you usually learn in school.

For them, the present contributes to the future: what they are doing now helps them do what they want later on. All three feel they probably will be able to achieve their ambitions when they grow up. Interestingly enough, they say this not with the somewhat brittle or facile certainty of "nothing can stop me if I study hard enough"; rather, they have some awareness that uncertainty can play a role, yet they retain confidence in their capacity to get the jobs they want.

> Interviewer: What would you like to do when you grow up?
> Mark: Be a surgeon.
> I: What makes you want to do that?
> M: I just like the idea of it -- interesting.
> I: Why do you think you'd like that job?
> M: Well, there's good pay in it; it's sort of exciting in a way and it's a very steady job. You always need more surgeons.
> I: Do you think you really will do that?
> M: Probably not. I don't know. I'll probably just be an everyday regular working man.
> I: Do you think you'll be able to get the job you want?
> M: Most likely.

Tom and Sidney make similar statements, indicating their intentions but leaving room to change their minds.

The complexity of their reasoning stands out in many of their responses. For example, all three of them depict the "perfect school" in unusually sophisticated fashion. Mark and Tom are able to conceive of a balance between freedom and control, whereas most of the other students can only see alternatives in one direction -- i.e., the perfect school could be perfectly "free" or perfectly strict, but not perfectly balanced. These boys also give multiple reasons for coming to the Hill in the first place; they mention parents and rejection of the conventional setting, but they also include positive reasons of their own as part of their decision: they view themselves as acting on their own behalf.

> Sidney: I decided to come here because I wanted to have a say in the beginning of the school . . . Another thing that partially influenced my decision was, like, that it was the closest one to my house.

In addition, all three recognized a number of purposes behind the annex program. Unlike the "immersed" students they had pretty clear ideas of why the teachers instituted certain practices.

> Interviewer: Why do you think the teachers here give field trips?
> Tom: Well, you learn more from them, they think, because this school's more free so they want to do things in a free way. So like instead of just sitting down in a classroom they bring us out to see things.

Mark, Tom, and Sidney also distinguish different types of students, pointing out that some kinds of students profit from a "looser structure" more than others.

Finally, these "integrated academics" recognize that high school next year will be a different experience, but assert their belief that they can do well in the new situation:

> Tom: Well, I think a whole lot of kids will be fooling around up there. But if you -- Some kids fool around because they just want to get out of high school, and if you go up there a lot of people don't want their kids up there. They send them to a private school because they think that they can't get work done, kids are fooling around and there are so many kids up there. But I think if you stick to it you can learn something if you really study. But if you fool around you won't learn anything. So if you just go up there and study you'll do all right.

In contrast with those students who focus on the anticipated regimentation of the high school, Tom concentrates on the opportunities to learn, and he places the responsibility for this education on himself rather than on a particular kind of setting. The other two boys also indicate that they expect to adapt successfully. The overall picture of this group is one of high fate control, a sense that present experiences are contributing to the future, complex modes of reasoning, and a clear sense that there are valuable educational purposes other than job training or credentialing.

Reference Settings at the Hill

Figure 9 summarizes the five patterns in terms of the background variables discussed earlier in the chapter. We find some familiar associations: low IQ, low mobility aspirations, and low fate control go together, as do their opposites. But these variables do not explain everything. In explaining these patterns I found the concept of reference settings more powerful than these background variables.

The notion involved in reference settings is that students judge the Hill not only in terms of their immediate surroundings but also in terms of other places they might be. The eighth grade boys come from elementary schools; they are about to enter high school. In addition they could be enrolled at the conventional junior high. These three "other places" may or may not operate as salient reference settings for the boys. We can describe the five patterns as distinct types of relationships between a boy's present school situation and his salient reference settings.

The "conventional strivers" provide the most dramatic example. Three of them came from an elementary school program for the academically talented -- a setting with considerable achievement press and formality. All four of them expect to attend private or parochial high schools with strong academic orientations. For this group, the annex school is an ephemeral experience, wedged between conventional reference settings. The "conventional strivers" find the reference settings more

FIGURE 9

Summary of Five Response Patterns at the Hill: Background Variables

Pattern	"Immersed"	"Negative"	"Contented Conventionals"	"Conventional Strivers"	"Integrated Academics"
Number of Students	4	4	12	4	3
Average IQ	100	100	114	126	125
Mobility	Stable Low	Stable Low Uncertain	Stable High	Upward	Stable High
Time Orientation	Immersed	Mixed	Mixed	Future	Future
Fate Control	Low	Low	High	High	High

in tune with their ideas about education than their immediate situation. Their future school is a particularly potent reference setting, making it difficult for them to be at ease in their immediate, less formal surroundings. These boys cope with the conflicts between reference settings and the Hill by rejecting the latter.

The reference setting framework also helps explain the other patterns. For the "immersed" students, school in the future is distant and remote; elementary school is no longer relevant; the conventional junior high school is caricatured as a nightmare. Embedded as they are in their current environment, boys in this "immersed" pattern simply do not experience much of a pull between various reference settings. They seldom go beyond the scope of their present reality. Other settings are fragmented and inconsequential in the face of immediate demands.

The "negatives" (Pattern II) minimize any discrepancies among reference settings under the general rubric of "school is awful." The conventional reference settings are salient negative examples, and the boys in this group include the Hill in that set of experiences. They tend to underplay any contrasts between the Hill and conventional schools.

The "contented conventionals" portray the conventional/Hill differences as large. The conventional junior high school is the most salient reference setting. These boys find it a negative place, much preferring the Hill. Future and past reference settings do not play so large a part as the other school where they might be right now.

Finally, the "integrated academics" are able to stand outside these various reference settings, seeing themselves as able to respond appropriately and successfully to each of them. They recognize certain conflicts between past, present and future settings, but they express confidence in meeting the demands of each of them.

In short, the five patterns represent different ways of coping with the perceived or unperceived discrepancies between the Hill and the students' salient reference settings.

The Lake Boys

The five patterns at the Hill also help explain the different responses of the eighth grade boys at the Lake. The Lake boys, it should be remembered, are fewer in number and more homogeneous in both IQ scores and in status origins. They are also more stable in their mobility aspirations: of the ten boys, eight are stable, at either a high or low status level. (Michael is decidedly upwardly mobile in his aspirations; Craig seems headed downward (probably a low-IQ-related response).

Half of the eighth grade boys fit the "contented conventional" pattern fairly closely -- Sam, Pete, Craig, Don, and Steve. All five had clearly instrumental orientations toward the purpose of schooling:

> Interviewer: What would you say is the main point of going to school?
> Sammy: To learn -- and, you know -- so you can get an education.
> I: Why is it important to learn things.
> S: Cause if you don't learn, you don't get money when you get old.
>
> Steve: Well, if you don't go to school, you're not going to be able to get a job. You'll have to live off your parents.
> Interviewer: Would you go to school if you didn't have to?
> S: Yeah -- I wouldn't want to stay around my parents.

All five would attend school even if it were not compulsory: they have faith in school.

The "contented conventionals" at the Hill like school: elementary school was, for the most part, enjoyable and going to the Hill was another generally positive experience. At the Lake, however, "contented conventionals" do not express such consistently positive feelings. The five boys like the Lake, but reject their former schools. This may be because the contrasts between present and past schools are more sharply drawn. Don referred to his elementary school as a "silly little school"; Sammy was also negative:

> Interviewer: What was that like?
> Sam: Awful.
> I: Like anything about it?
> S: No.

The three remaining boys represent a special case: all three of them participated in a team-teaching "cluster" within the conventional junior high for seventh grade, then transferred to the Lake for eighth grade. They had the experience of having the same English teacher two years in a row -- calling her "Miss Nichols" the first year and "Jean" the second. All of these boys strongly preferred their present school to the conventional setting; they rejected the conventional setting.

> Interviewer: What was (the East) like?
> Pete: A dump. (laugh) I couldn't stand it; that's why I came here.
>
> Interviewer: Would you go to school even if you didn't have to?
> Craig: It all depends. Like this kind of school, I like it. The East -- I'm not too crazy about that.

Steve raises a different criticism; he didn't like the East cluster because "you could get away with murder," and he left the conventional school because "you don't really learn that much."

Despite their rejection of the conventional setting, these boys came to the Lake for pragmatic rather than ideological reasons. Sam, Steve, and Craig all mentioned that the primary motivation for them was an older brother at the Lake:

> Sammy: I don't know, my brother came here and I thought, you know, the East would be the same as elementary school, cause you got to do so much work . . . (trails off)
> Interviewer: You thought it would be easier here?
> S: Yeah.
> I: What sounded good about it?
> S: I don't know -- no homework . . . it wasn't as hard.

Steve refers to his brother too but emphasizes the opposite recommendation -- that the Lake provided an opportunity to advance more quickly:

> Interviewer: How did you decide to come here?
> Steve: Well, my older brother came here. He said it was almost like going into ninth grade right off.
> . . . .

> Steve: I don't know why you go to elementary school, cause you don't really learn nothing. Like maybe second, third, and fourth -- but fifth and sixth, it's all review. Up here it's all fractions, decimals, and stuff like that.

Pete and Don mention the strong recommendations of friends and neighbors as their primary reason for coming, Don adding that he thinks he was "scared of the East."

Although all these boys can talk in terms of "freedom," most of them focus on other aspects of the school: Don has particular affection for Mr. Phillips; Pete and Steve like the chance to choose courses. Only Sammy mentions freedom as what he likes best about the Lake:

> It's free. You don't have to stay in your seat all day and stuff like that.

Like the Hill's "contented conventionals," the five boys in this group raise some objections -- to particular teachers, especially, but any criticisms are minor:

> Interviewer: What do you like least about this school?
> Pete: (pause) I don't really have any complaints about this place.

Finally, the boys recognize that high school next year will be different and more regimented, but they express confidence in their ability to handle it. Craig mentions the stricter teachers and assigned seats, worry that the Lake "kids will be zapped," but adds he doesn't think it will be hard. Don, in a similar vein, says:

> It's going to be culture shock, I suppose. The teachers won't be half as good . . . I'll be in a daze -- for a couple of minutes.

They expect to be resilient.

Two boys, Chuck and Tim, are analogues to the "immersed" boys at the Hill. Passive and inarticulate, both boys came from the lower end of the IQ scale at the Lake, and both came from low status families. Neither aimed for high-status jobs; neither anticipated going to college. Tim felt he might go to vocational school next year instead of the regular high school. Tim indicated he would not go to school if it were not required, while Chuck said he would,

> Cause then I wouldn't get a job or anything. You have to know some stuff.

Tim clearly sees school as a difficult obstacle course. Before he came to the Lake he was afraid it would be hard work. His elementary school was "just school," he liked nothing much about it. When asked how school helped him to get the job he wanted he replied,

> A lot. It helps you so you don't have to go on to college any more.

He doesn't know why the teachers give free periods or give field trips, nor can he explain the main purposes of the school except to say it is an "experiment." He expects high school to be difficult, especially algebra.

Chuck is a more ambiguous example; in a way he is a close cousin to the "contented conventionals." I call him "immersed" because despite his cheerfulness, he has difficulty finding reasons for various school policies and because of his low mobility aspirations:

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> Interviewer: What do you think you really will do when you grow up?
> Chuck: (pause; several false starts) I think I'll be a plumber to tell you the truth.
> I: Why do you think you'll be a plumber.
> C: Cause I just keep thinking I'll be a plumber a lot. That's all I ever think about, so I think just might become a plumber.

Earlier in the interview he described the perfect school as one where the students wore coats and ties -- a private school. "No, not for me," he added. When I asked him what sorts of things he would learn in a perfect school, he replied, "Perfect stuff." He does not fear the high school; he simply doesn't think about it much.

Al and Michael fall more in line with the "conventional strivers. Like their counterparts at the Hill, they raise a number of serious objections to the current situation.

> Michael: I want a good job when I grow up. I don't want to be no trash picker, or garbageman, or anything like that. I want a college education and a lot of background in back of me -- you know?
> Interviewer: What would you say you're getting out of school right now?
> M: To tell you the truth, like this year, I'm not learning one single solitary thing, compared to the grammar school. Cause this school's too easy on you, for some kids. For other kids it's great . . . I'd probably be better off at the East.
> I: How come you're staying here, then?
> M: Cause, at the East they clamp down on you. You can't do nothing. But in this school, like, you can do what you want.

Al is a much weaker example of this type. His objections are more compartmentalized, but he too has contradictions in his thinking:

> Interviewer: Why do kids get in trouble?
> Al: Because there's too much freedom. I like the freedom but I don't. Too much freedom spoils the kid, you know. Then when he goes to (Whitetown High) he's going to have to really adjust.

Al frequently told the teachers what he thought of them: he was, in many ways, the loudmouth of the school: the school's informality gave him an opportunity to sound off. yet his ideas about learning were quite conventional, and he rejected field trips as a viable way to learn. He delivered a short polemic against an "Ecology" field trip:

> Mr. Phillips took a class to the sewage place . . . I'm going to learn a lot from that. I mean, I can learn where all the "beep" goes. In case I get in an important conversation I can say, "Well, I know where all the shit goes. It goes into that pipe and out around -- " you know (laugh). You know, it's going to do me a lot of good when I get older.

He has some trouble understanding some of the ideas behind the school:

> Interviewer: Why do you think the teachers want to teach at a school like this instead of at a school like the East?
> Al: Maybe they don't have to know as much here. (pause) No, that couldn't be it. I think it's just because they'd rather teach in a more relaxed atmosphere . . . They don't have to keep yelling at the kids.

Both Michael and Al worry what the high school will be like for them. Their reservations about the nature of the Lake, high aspirations, and fears of their future school make them analogues to the "conventional strivers," even though Al and Michael are slightly lower in IQ scores and more positive about the Lake than their counterparts at the Hill.

Mel was an "integrated academic" more than anything else. He seemed to have internalized some of the ideas behind the Lake. For him the main purpose of school was

> Mostly to learn about yourself and what you want to do in the future
>
> Interviewer: What are you getting out of school right now?
> Mel: Learning how to be independent, mostly. I can't say too much for my schoolwork . . . In the East I'd probably learn more than I am here, mathwise, but -- I learn here responsibilities of a person, you know -- you have to respect other people and their property.

Though less academic than the Hill's "integrated academics," Mel felt the Lake contributed to his future -- he enjoyed school and felt it helpful. He distinguishes among different kinds of students, advocating a pluralism of educational options for different kinds of people. He can make distinctions concerning the effects of the Lake, rather than simply attributing some global effect to it. Also like the "integrated academics," he is confident he will be able to achieve what he wants, but at the same time he is open to the future's uncertainty.

> I'd like to work out of doors -- a forest ranger, maybe even the police department, I'm not sure. Something that would bring me into contact with people or animals . . . My dad would like me to be what I want to be . . . .
> Interviewer: Do you think you'll be able to get the job you want?
> Mel: Yes . . .
> I: Can you think of anything that might keep you from getting that job?
> M: Not my religion -- I'm a Catholic . . . The only thing that I can think of that might hurt me would be the way I dress, or the way I wear my hair, or whatever. That's the only thing I can think of (maybe my Italian blood). . . I don't know what it's going to be like in seven or eight years.

For Mel, the future is not a sure thing by any means, but he expresses the confidence to do what he wants in high school and beyond.

In sum, the eighth grade boys at the Lake fall within the same general scheme of patterns as the Hill students. We find, however, no analogues to the Hill "negatives," but because the Lake numbers are so small any comparison of the distribution of patterns is unreliable (see Figure 10).

FIGURE 10

Number of Annex Eighth Grade Boys, in Each Pattern, by School

Pattern	Hill	Lake	Pattern Total
I. "Immersed"	4	2	6
II. "Negative"	4	0	4
III. "Contented Conventionals"	12	5	17
IV. "Conventional Strivers"	4	2	6
V. "Integrated Academics"	3	1	4
School Total	27	10	37

Alternative Schools and Reference Settings

This chapter has defined eighth grade boys' approach to the annex schools in terms of five different patterns, ranging from uncritical immersion to sophisticated independent judgment. The five patterns, derived from interviews at the Hill, were also used to explain the expectations of the boys at the Lake. What do these five patterns tell us about alternative schools as conscious efforts to control socialization in schools?

I have already described many alternative schools as efforts to change the society through changing the institutional context of schools. The central assumption underlying many alternative schools seems to be that if the traditional elements of schooling are reversed -- hierarchy, formality, and achievement press, then a desirable, effective, change-oriented socialization setting will have been created.

The two annex schools, in my view, do not match either the conventional or alternative extremes. They are a mixed model. They offer students free time and many field trips, but rely on conventional classroom practice much of the time. They reduce the achievement press and formality common to most public schools, but they strike the observer as smaller, more personalized versions of conventional schools rather than radical alternatives. From an outside perspective, the Hill and the Lake are mild reforms.

Yet, in terms of students' perspectives, these "mild reforms" can introduce large discrepancies -- discrepancies between the perceived demands of the school and a student's own image of what school should be like for him. This image comes, in some measure, from the student's salient reference settings. The "conventional strivers," for example, see the

Hill as running directly counter to their own sense of who they are, where they are going, and the legitimate ways of getting there. The annex schools are judged in relation to the student's image of himself and where he wants to go.

Thus, instead of describing a socialization setting solely in terms of its organizational structure, it seems important to consider how various parts of that structure fit in with a student's powerful reference settings. His positive or negative view toward what school was like, could be like, and will be like can produce a salient sense of what changes are legitimate and effective. In short, the nature and force of a student's reference settings and the perceived discrepancy between his present situation and other places can determine whether a student can cope with an alternative learning environment or must defend against it.

The next chapter follows the way these various discrepancies between student expectations (the five patterns) and the annex school demands (the range of learning settings) are reflected in student behavior.

Footnotes to Chapter VI

[1] Neither expectations nor aspirations need be realistic, though many of the students' perceptions of reality were probably fairly accurate; that is, their sense of future destination was most likely correct. I am indebted to Mary Jo Bane for the observation.

[2] For the reader's convenience I have attached a verbal tag to each pattern. These labels are intended to make the text easier to follow; they do not represent eternal truth.

[3] Again it is difficult to assess the validity of such a downwardly mobile statement. Dennis' statement may represent a fantasy choice. See in this connection Victoria Steinitz' noted work on children's perceptions of status differences in housing.

CHAPTER VII

THE EIGHTH GRADE BOYS: BEHAVIOR

How do the eighth grade boys behave as they go through the entire range of learning settings at the annex schools? Does their behavior reflect the different patterns of expectations discussed in the previous chapter?

I assumed that the students' behavior would change from setting to setting; that behavior would, in some sense, represent the joint product of setting demands and the students' own expectations. This formulation omits some important variables -- personality characteristics in particular. Surely individual temperament plays an important role in how these boys act. Still, given the sociological thrust of the study, I felt I could draw some interesting relationships between school demands, student expectations, and behavior without introducing another whole realm of constructs related to personality.

In this chapter, then, I follow each eighth grade boy through four different learning settings: free periods, field trips, and two contrasting classrooms. Each setting represents a different point along a three-dimensional continuum of hierarchy, formality, and achievement press. Free time had little (or absent) adult authority; there were some formal procedures for activity (related to geographical boundaries), but there was no external press to achieve. Field trips were quasi-academic settings. There was an ambiguity between recreational and educational purposes. By and large students did not have tasks to complete; achievement press was minimal. Formal procedures were usually flexible.[1] I also selected, at each annex, two classrooms representing "extremes" of sorts. Although I found no "pure" examples of "openness" or "closedness," I wanted to observe students in contrasting classroom situations. At the Hill one particular contrast was obvious: Susan's class was the "tightest" ship; Frances' math classes were the "loosest." At the Lake, however, there was less consensus about which teachers represented "extremes." Students differed in their choices for the strictest teacher: Jean, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Gibbon all got votes. People also disagreed over the "easiest" teacher. I finally chose Mr. Gibbon's rather even and controlled science classes and Jean's English classes, which varied widely in terms of types of activity and control.

In short, for each annex, I gathered data on student behavior in four contrasting learning settings: free periods, field trips, an "open" class and a "closed" class. In discussing behavior in these settings I have not treated the Hill and the Lake separately; in this chapter I have "collapsed" the distinction between the two schools. My main purpose, at this point, is to focus on the relationships between the expectation patterns, demands, and behavior. Clarifying the differences between schools becomes subordinate to the task of specifying the variation between the five patterns. I deal with the thirty-seven boys together.

Before turning to the analysis of behavior it is important to discuss the methods I used and what I looked for in each of the four settings.

Free Periods and Field Trips

My data on free periods and field trip behavior is indirect. I asked students in their interviews about what they did in each of those two settings. Although I had first-hand acquaintance with field trips and free period behavior (helping to drive students places, watching students running through the halls), I found it impractical to gather systematic direct observations for either setting.[2] My data for free periods and field trips consists of the students' own statements of what they did and how they felt about those settings.

Students used their free time in a variety of ways: some boys studied in the library, some played games (chess or basketball were the most common). Still others wandered around the halls. I asked students what they did during free time and categorized their responses in terms of whether they treated free time as an opportunity for study, a chance to play games (recreation and relaxation), or a chance to "fool around." Examples follow:

Academic Opportunity

Interviewer: What do you usually do when you have a free period?
Alfonso: I probably go to the library and read.
I: Do you wish you had more free time?
A: Yeah. I got math five times a week and I don't like math at all -- it's my worst subject . . .
I: What would you do if you had more?
A: I'd probably read a lot more . . . I'd bring in my own books.

Recreation and Relaxation

Jimmy: I used to just -- sometimes we could go in another class, but other times we'd just go upstairs and -- and play a game. Chess or something. Last year we had a ping pong table and we'd always play ping pong when we had a free period.

Fool Around

Interviewer: What do you usually do when you have free time?
Pat: Fool around (laugh). It depends . . . if a whole mess of kids have a free period we might go outside and get in trouble for something we didn't do.

I asked two questions about field trips: How did the students themselves treat field trips? Why did they think the teachers organized field trips in the first place?

Some students reported that they learned on field trips; others merely tagged along or fooled around -- for them field trips were a form of release.

"Learning" Responses

Carl: We go on quite a lot of field trips.
Interviewer: What do you like about them?
C: We go a lot of places and see a lot of stuff -- a lot of different stuff that you wouldn't regularly see in regular school.

I: What would you say you get out of those trips?
C: You learn about races and different religions and stuff.
I: Do you think they help you?
C: Yeah, I do.

Interviewer: Do you like these field trips?
Dennis: Yeah, most of them are pretty interesting. One last week I went on, we went (to a Black neighborhood) and someone told us all about the different neighborhoods, the gang fights he was in, and stuff like that. It's real neat. So you learn a lot from them, you learn a lot.

"Release" Responses

Interviewer: Do you go on many field trips?
Stan: I haven't gone on that many this year. About two.
I: Do you not like to go on them?
S: I like going on field trips, yeah.
I: Uh, what do you get out of those trips?
S: Mischief (laugh). One day, me and Rennie went down by the subway, we were runnin' up the walls. Some drunk chased us into the Town Hall.

Raymond: (Field trips) don't teach you much. We don't usually go anyplace that has to do with your studying. We just have to go -- we just go to see how they do it -- to get out of school.

The Classroom Observations

My co-observers and I watched each eighth grade boy in two classroom situations. At the Hill we observed students in Susan's classes and Frances' classes. At the Lake we looked at the way the boys acted in Ben's and Jean's class. My intention was not evaluate teaching but to explore how students responded to different situational demands. I use no measure of teacher effectiveness, explicitly or implicitly.

Observers followed each student for a twenty-minute time segment in each class, keeping a detailed running record of the student's words and actions. A number of important methodological issues arise in connection with this strategy. Perhaps the most important involves the question of "matching." I treat different classes with the same teacher as equivalent, but this is in some sense artificial. It is possible to match classrooms on some major variables, like teacher and subject, but it is never possible to match two settings on all the variables that may be relevant. The classrooms I looked at were only the "same" in a limited way. Further, I cannot claim that the Hill classrooms and the Lake classrooms are equivalent. I cannot establish, for example, that the "extremes" of each setting are equidistant. I operate from the premise that the classrooms I selected are analogous in that they represent the "open" and "closed" extremes relative to their specific institutional context.

Other methodological questions remain: Were the twenty-minute segments representative samples of behavior? What if the teacher changed his or her tactics in the middle of an observation period; thus changing the demands of the setting? These and related matters are considered in Appendix VI.

The Coding Scheme. I coded the observations in terms of two main categories -- task-focused behavior and escape behavior, then subdivided each category into active and passive components:

if the student was focused on the task at hand, was he pursuing the task with initiative or was he responding to instructions? If the boy was trying to escape the assignment in some way, was he simply uninvolved or was he disruptive? In making these distinctions I used the following criteria:

Focused Behavior
Is the student attending to the task presented by the teacher -- either by apparently listening or by performing the prescribed activity (e.g. reading, writing, conducting an experiment, etc.)?

> Initiating (I) Does the student pursue the task on his own? Actions: getting work folder without being told, raising hand, not in response to a question, getting additional work to do after completion of assignment, going up to the teacher, continuing to work when teacher is out of room. Words: contributing to a discussion voluntarily, asking a question, asking for help.
>
> Examples:
>
> Raymond is asking Norm a lot of questions about the assignment.
>
> Walt: OK, let's have a topic.
> Boy: How about "cars"?
>
> Jimmy: Miss Barker, how do you know if someone's rich?
>
> Responding (R) Is the student doing work reluctantly or passively? Actions include getting material only when told, raising hand only in response to teacher's question, completing a task only if prompted to do so. Words: talking only if addressed directly. Responding is a residual category for focused behavior. It is construed broadly.
>
> Examples:
>
> T: Get your folder, Rennie. (He does.)
>
> T: George, whaddya gonna do -- sit on top of that chair. You've got an awful lot of work to do by Thursday. (He gets up and gets his work folder.)

Escape Behavior. Is the student disregarding the task at hand, either simply not paying attention (e.g. talking with a friend about an unrelated topic) or by actively disrupting the class.

Uninvolvement. (U) Quietly doing something else; doing "nothing." Actions would include getting up and wandering around the room, doodling, fiddling with various objects and any actions that seem contained or localized, including quiet "play-punching" with neighbors and short-range paper airplanes. Words include talking about other things, joking.

Examples:

Jimmy rolls up his paper and whispers through it to Jack. He puts his feet up on the chair.

Carl is writing on the desk and taking apart a pen. His book is closed now. He looks at his schedule, replaces it in his pocket. Under his breath he says, "This sucks."

Jon fidgets more or less constantly, but very low key, quietly now paying very little attention (to the play reading). His friend tells him when he has to read something, shows him his lines, otherwise his gaze wanders around the room.

Disruption (D) Actively disturbing the teacher or others outside his immediate group through loud noises, throwing objects directly across the teacher's line of sight, fighting with another student, or giving lip to the teacher that goes beyond simple joking and tries to undermine the activity.

Examples:

Cliff: (amidst loud noise) We should sing one song -- that'll get it out of our system and we can do math.

T: Hey, everyone -- let's make a circle of chairs.
Turner: Why not make a triangle or a square? (He talks loudly to his friend)
T: Hey, you want to sit in your chair, please?
Turner: How come you didn't ask Cliff?

The length of observational records varied considerably, depending on the class and on the individual. For example, a quiet passive student, responding to instructions did not require fast and furious writing, whereas a mobile, disruptive student was difficult to keep up with. For some students, then, the records were much longer than others. Moreover, sometimes one entry would cover working, stopping to talk, then returning to work -- a cycle that was coded as "responding-uninvolvement-responding." Thus the number of codes for each twenty minute segment varied, too. The number ranged from six codes for a segment to thirty-four codes. Unless there was a change within an entry there was one code per entry. The variation also depended on the specificity of the observations, something determined by such objective factors as distance from the student and what else was going on in the room.

Here is a short coded sample:

MATH CLASS 12/12/72
Hector
10:50 sitting very alone by wall, working, pays a little
but very little attention to noises around him
(Responding)
10:55 stretches, looks around, back to work (Uninvolved-
Responding)
Susan is in and out constantly, talking to Frances,
asks if anyone wants anything at the store.
10:58 Frances over to Hector in response to raised hand,
works with him (Initiating)
two girls come over want help, Frances and Hector
ignore them, despite increasing noise from other
kids
10:63 Hector concentrating on work tho George and Dick
are very active (R)
Hector just looking up every once in a while (U-R)
11:07 Hector calls Frances over, asks her a question, gets
answer, back to work (I)
11:17 something thrown at him, asks "Mike, did you throw
this?" - no - (U) "I know who did," throws it at
Cliff, hard (Disruptive)

Audience Behavior. Students in both open and closed settings did pretty much what they were asked to do. As they worked, they broke up the routine by talking with friends, fidgeting, day dreaming, and squirming. In terms of our categories, then, the observers typically saw a cycle alternating between moments of focus and moments of escape -- in particular, responding and uninvolvement. Disruption and initiative were rarer.

This picture does not differ very much from what we would expect from a group of adults meeting together. Although adolescents probably move around and touch themselves and their friends more than adults, what we see in classrooms is a kind of "audience behavior": the audience usually knows about when the show is about to start and when it is approaching a close. In between the beginning and end the audience responds to certain cues of how to act: they quiet down at the beginning, get up to leave at the end, and alternate between responding and uninvolvement in between.

Given that "audience behavior" dominated our classroom observations, the principal way of distinguishing among various patterns of action lay in the extremes of our category system: when students did or did not show initiative; when students did or did not tend to disrupt their classes. Despite overall responding and uninvolvement, some students would act as if the "show" in question was a ballet; others as if it were a wrestling match, complete with "Bronx cheers." The main point is that any extreme responses were rare, yet it was only on the basis of extremes that I could distinguish one student's behavior from another's.

The four settings and the dimensions of classification I used are summarized below in Figure 11. Each setting represents a different combination of hierarchy, formality, and achievement press. Again, in discussing student behavior I have not distinguished between the Lake and the Hill: the thirty-seven boys are treated together.

FIGURE 11

Four Learning Settings, Sources of Data, and Dimensions of Classification

Setting:	Free Periods	Field Trips	"Open" and "Closed" Classrooms
Source of Data:	Interview	Interview	Direct Observations
Dimensions:	Academic opportunity vs. Recreation and Relaxation vs. Fooling Around	Learning Opportunity vs. Release	Focused Behaviors (initiative or responding) vs. Escape Behavior (uninvolvement or disruption)

Pattern I Behavior: "Immersed"

The boys in this group usually acquiesce to immediate setting demands, occasionally flaring up to disrupt an activity. Some students in other patterns questioned the legitimacy of free periods and field trips, but the "immersed" students -- six in all -- floated through the various learning settings, responding to each set of demands in turn.

Free time bewilders the "immersed" boys. They don't see much of a purpose behind it and they tend to see free periods as release. At the Hill only Raymond can come up with a rationale for free time, saying that there are not enough classes to fill up the schedule. At the Lake, Chuck and Tim give truncated, hesitating explanations for the practice:

> Tim: I go upstairs and play around, or go finish my homework . . .
> Interviewer: Why do the teachers give you free periods?
> T: So that you can do your homework -- so you don't have to do it at home.
> I: Any other reasons?
> T: I don't know.

Of the six boys, only Stan says he fools around during free periods; none mentions the possibility that free time could be a chance to learn how to handle a measure of responsibility.

Similarly, most of the "immersed" boys consider field trips as escape rather than opportunity:

> Interviewer: What do you get out of field trips?
> Raymond: Nothing -- you just have a good time. You're supposed to get something out of 'em, though. They don't help at all.

> Interviewer: Why do you think the teachers have field trips?
> George: To give you a day off, I guess -- from school.
>
> Interviewer: What do you get out of field trips?
> Stan: Mischief.

Only Tim mentions field trips as a chance to learn, but his understanding seems sketchy:

> Interviewer: Do you go on many field trips?
> Tim: A lot
> I: What do you get out of them?
> T: A lot.
> I: Can you tell me a field trip that you got a lot out of?
> T: I can't remember. I don't remember.
> I: How do they help you?
> T: You learn.
> I Why do you think the teachers give field trips?
> T: They help you learn.

For the "immersed" group, then, the question of whether unusual settings are legitimate contexts for learning simply does not arise; they merely travel through them as best they can.

Embedded in their present situations, these boys either struggled to cope with classwork as best they could or else erupted in the absence of obvious adult control. In the "closed" classrooms Hector, Raymond, Chuck, and Tim moved back and forth between responding and uninvolvement. Tim provides an unusually "pure" example of a person trying hard to meet the demands of the immediate situation:

> Tim is copying down vocabulary words as Mr. Gibbon dictates them. He looks over at Danny's paper to see if he is on the right page. "Jesus," he whispers. He shifts his paper, then copies "chloroplasts" letter by letter, keeping his finger on the word. He is now a word behind. He looks at Danny's paper again, writing down words. He continually checks back to the text for the correct spelling. The

> class is very quiet as they do this. Tim flips pages back and forth, trying to find the one Mr. Gibbon is referring to. He seems to have trouble locating the word on the page. He erases something he's written and falls further behind.
> Mr. Phillips interrupts, and while he talks to Mr. Gibbon, Tim stands up to look more closely at Danny's paper. He uses the time to catch up. He checks Danny's paper more openly now, acknowledging he's behind. He points his pencil to various words on Danny's paper then compares them with his own. He sits back down. (2/26/73)

In the "closed" classroom setting Hector and George each showed instances of disruption, but stopped immediately upon reproach.

The more "open" classroom settings were different. Chuck and Tim (at the Lake) continued to act much the same way, but all four boys at the Hill disrupted classroom activity. Stan and George sustained such activity despite the teacher's admonitions. Hector and Raymond did so only briefly:

> George wandering, gets in a sort of fight with Dick which Frances has to break up, gets something taken away from him. George is told not to throw anything, but Dick throws something at him, and George throws something back. Frances reprimands him about three times in two minutes. Then she starts working with him at her desk: "You did a good job with this, you did very well . . . that's fine!" He works for a while but gets distracted again by Dick. Despite another reprimand from Frances, they start throwing a milk carton back and forth. This develops into a fight and she takes both of them out into the hall for a lecture.

In this example, George responds to the teacher's special attentions, but he cannot sustain his focus when his friend places competing demands on him.

"Immersed" boys, in sum, either move passively through all the various annex settings, or else act disruptively when external controls are not in evidence. For some, free time and field trips were hard to figure out.

Pattern II Behavior: "Negatives"

No boys at the Lake corresponded to the negative approach of Rennie, Joseph, Phil, and Jimmy at the Hill. But these four are worth treating in depth. All four disrupted class on occasion, and spent a considerable amount of effort escaping from assigned tasks. They tended to view field trips and free time cynically, as opportunities for further release. Yet each of them expressed their negative approach to school differently: Rennie was the most consistently physically aggressive, Joseph the most verbally disruptive and cynical; Phil and Jimmy retreated into sullen passivity.

Rennie -- a showman of the first rank -- attracted my attention early in the year. He knew he held within him the capacity to turn a class into chaos and he often played with this power:

> It depends on what kind of mood I'm in. (laugh) Usually I'm in a mood to fool around, but I do my work anyways. In between -- then I'll go over and sock somebody in the mouth -- "Gee that was fun" . . . I'm not a follower of my friends. I do things the way I want to do them. If I don't want to do my work I don't do it . . . .

During the course of the year Rennie broke his hand when hitting another student, was accused of smashing a piano, placed an iron bar on a radiator in order to create a hot weapon, and threw a knife (gently) at Stan, his closest friend. His behavior was consistent across classrooms:

Math ("Open")

Frances asks the class to write a verbal description of anything in the room, then have a partner draw the object as it is described.

Rennie: I need a new piece of paper.
He rips up an unused piece of paper then does the same thing again. He piles up three cushions on an easy chair, sits on them, then throws them off. He looks at his third piece of paper, crumples it up, throws it at another boy who throws it back. Rennie gets another sheet of paper.

R: I can't think of anything good. (He rips up the paper.)
Frances: How's your sentence coming along? You seem to be having a difficult time.
R: This is my fifth piece of paper.

After a pause Frances goes to a group of girls then returns to Rennie.

F: I'd like to see your sentence.
R: Get me a piece of paper and I'll do it.
He gets a piece of paper then crumples it up. (9/12/72)

Science ("Closed")

Rennie comes into class late, in the middle of Susan's roll call. As he finds a seat he punches Stan, who returns the favor. Susan takes a group of boys and some laboratory equipment to the rear of the room; Rennie follows.

S: You're not in on this.
R: Why? Why can't I do it?

He moves off and takes a chair. He thumbs absently through a notebook and watches two other boys as they play with some chewing gum. Rennie slides his chair back to the group of experimenters and talks to two of the group. He dips his pen in a beaker of acid.

Boy: Touch it with your hand, touch it with your hand.
Rennie dips litmus paper in all solutions, then mixes solutions together. One of the boys protests. Stan slides his chair back.

> Stan: What are you doing, Rennie? (He slides back.)
> Rennie takes beaker and pours solutions into flower pot by window, then gets up and walks out of the room.
> Susan: Get in here, Rennie.
> (He returns to the rear of the room, then slides chair to the front. Stan comes over; they start to talk.
> Susan comes over to them and asks them if they've done the work. . . . (9/12/73

Rennie knew that the teachers see him as a control problem during free time, and he thrived on their attention:

> They don't think I can handle free periods. I don't see where they get that idea. (laugh)

And although he protests that he doesn't get in that much trouble any more, he explains one free period incident this way:

> That isn't trouble: it's fightin'.
> So what did you want me to do? Sit there?
> And get laughed at? I didn't like that. My ego was hurt then. So I got up and kicked the table. See, I got him back though, didn't I? Who won that brawl?

Rennie sees field trips as a broken promise (see Chapter VI). In his view they don't really teach anything, so he uses the opportunity to have fun.

Finally, despite bluster, bravado, and real destruction, Rennie concedes:

> The teachers are nice . . . You can talk to them . . . They try to teach you more . . . They make a good effort at it, too.
> Interviewer: Are they succeeding?
> Rennie: Yeah -- with most of the kids. They're succeeding with me. Just a little bit. Like I just do the work I'm supposed to do, not all this extra junk . . .

Rennie is a colorful and complex figure; his aggressive behavior and cynical pose probably express many things besides a judgment on the Hill. He seems to dismiss the future problems posed by Whitetown High, but it is difficult to take what he says at face value:

> (The high school) will probably be better than this.
> Interviewer: How will it be better?
> Rennie: I don't know -- this place is a dump. At least they'll have a cafeteria.
> I: How do you think the rules will be?
> R: Much different. Like you can't talk back to the teachers. You can't walk out in the hall swearing, tell dirty jokes or anything . . . I'll feel at home sooner or later. I've adjusted to it before (he tells an anecdote about elementary school, referring to obedient students as "a bunch o' tin soldiers.")

Joseph also disrupted classes regularly, but his disruption is more verbal abuse than anything else: he devoted much of his time calling to friends across the room, mimicking an emotionally disturbed boy also in the class, "giving the finger" to teachers when not looking, and so forth. His general approach was cynical:

> Do you think you could get whatever job you wanted?
> Joseph: No -- too many shitheads around.
> Interviewer: Like, what kinds of things would keep you from getting the job you wanted.
> J: Well, probably prejudiced people who didn't like Catholics.

This cynical approach carries over to his use of free time and field trips. Joseph sees free periods as a release, an escape closely related to skipping class:

> Interviewer: How many free periods do you have?
> Joseph: One. But I usually have a lot because I skip some -- I don't know if you'd call it free.
> I: And what do you usually do during your free time?
> J: Walk around the school, smoke, or look for other kids that are skipping.

> I: Are there enough things to do?
> J: It depends what other kids are skipping. We can sit upstairs and talk.

And although he parrots a rationale for field trips ("You learn about different things and different people."), he reverts to sarcasm when probed:

> Interviewer: What kinds of things would you learn about?
> Joseph: Well, we went to the Potato Chip Factory one day and that was really thrilling. All those potato chips just cooking away just turned me on.
> I: Do you think that sort of thing helps you learn, though?
> J: I don't know. It depends if I want to go in the potato chip business.

Joseph, then, views all four settings as generally a waste of time -- constraints to be outmaneuvered.

Jimmy's and Phil's negative approach takes a more subdued form: Their classroom behavior is more uninvolved than disruptive.

> Jimmy rolls up his piece of paper and whispers through it to Jack. He puts his feet up on the chair. The teacher is leading a discussion. Jimmy moves over to Jack, asks him a question and rocks back and forth on his chair. He grabs a pencil from Jack and throws it on the floor.
> Jack: (loudly) Give me my pencil.
> Jimmy: (softly) Aw, you scare me.
> He moves back to his old seat. He unrolls his paper, then rolls it up again. Stan pinches Jimmy's sneaker.
> Teacher: Hey, Jimmy, think about this (she goes on)
> Jimmy: That's a mental idea.
> The teacher goes on to someone else, Jimmy tunes out again . . . . (11/27/73)

Both of them seek to avoid confrontation in class. In the above excerpt Jimmy avoids involvement by dismissing the teacher's idea as "mental". Similarly Phil deflects the teacher's questions, even when directed specifically at him:

Teacher: Phil, why did you check that one?
Phil: Because I had to check something. Don't ask me, ask Turner, he's got the best answers. I'm too tired.

Both these boys also tend to reject field trips and free time as potentially constructive situations:

Jimmy: I go on a couple (of field trips) -- not that many, though. Like I think we have a little too many field trips. Like skating. And we always have basketball in the middle of school. We should have it after.
Interviewer: Do you get anything out of field trips at all?
J: Nope.
I: You don't think they teach you anything?
J: No.
I: Why do you think the teachers give field trips?
J: They probably think it will help you, but I don't think so.

Interviewer: Do you get anything out of field trips?
Phil: I don't know -- it depends on where we go, you know. Like if it's someplace boring, nobody cares.
I: Why do the teachers here give field trips?
P: I guess they don't want to work.

Free time also presents them with difficulties:

Interviewer: Do you have any free periods?
Jimmy: No, because we got suspended. They said we can't have any.
I: Does that make you mad? Do you think you should have some?
J: No, I don't think I should have any until I -- until I work hard enough to get it . . . .
I: Why do the teachers give the kids free time?
J: Because they want this school to be different than everyone else -- not like all the other schools.
I: Why do you think they want that?
J: I don't know. They probably think we learn more here . . .
I: So why would having free time help you learn more?
J: It wouldn't. Like we should have a study (hall), but we don't have anything to study.

And Phil, though he enjoys the free periods, sees them in terms of hidden constraints:

> Phil: Whenever you have free time it isn't really free because they'll always do something -- making you go someplace and read or something like that.

In short, both of them, like the "immersed" boys, float from setting to setting -- seeing all four (field trips, free time, and classrooms) as misguided efforts. Although they do complete most assignments, they exhibit a lot of uninvolved behavior. We can make sense of this entire "negative" foursome by saying that they seem to translate their rejection of school into one of two forms of behavior -- aggressive rebellion or sullen withdrawal. All four are coming to grips with external pressures, but they do so in different ways -- Rennie and Joseph by striking back overtly, Phil and Jimmy through cynical resignation.

For all four, the discrepancy between their own expectations and the environment around them is this: they expect school to be coercive, a series of external pressures to surmount. Yet the Hill offers a somewhat different set of circumstances: the teachers seem benign; more of the responsibility for learning is thrust upon the students themselves. For the present, they are confronted with more choice and informality.

How can they make sense out of this discrepancy between past experience and present reality? Rebellion and withdrawal seem to represent attempts to maintain pre-existing patterns of expectations, attempts to resist changing in the face of a new environment. Rennie and Joseph act on the assumption that external controls are inherently malevolent and seek to subvert them wherever possible. Jimmy and Phil assume that learning takes place only with strict external controls, hence are unable to construe their present situation as potentially educative. All four seem to regard the conventional school as the way things really are: the Hill is only a disguised version. Joseph and Rennie extend their previous notions of school to the Hill and view all schools as illegitimate infringements on their freedom; Jimmy and (less so) Phil see conventional school as more valuable, hence they react negatively to the Hill, despite their enjoyment of its freedom.

Pattern III Behavior: "Contented Conventionals"

This large middle group -- twelve Hill students, five Lake students -- constitutes half the entire sample. They exhibited fairly wide ranges of behavior, especially in the "non-instructional" settings of free periods and field trips.

In classrooms, the "contented conventionals" usually did what they were asked to do. They followed directions, completed worksheets, occasionally lapsing into side conversations or daydreams. They sometimes disrupted a class and sometimes went beyond the call of duty by asking questions, approaching the teacher, or volunteering an answer or comment. They tended to be quieter in the more "closed" classroom setting and more disruptive in the "open" setting.

Pete illustrates typical behavior for this group. In Mr. Gibbon's science class he intermittently focuses on the task and even shows one example of initiative (raising his hand). Audience behavior predominates.

> Science ("Closed")
>
> Pete sits back in his seat, his arms folded. He whispers once to Mel who is sitting next to him. Pete raises his hand to answer a question, but Ben calls on someone else. He stretches back, then bends over his own "science current event," apparently reading it. He leans back, still reading the article, then thumbs through the rest of the magazine. Meanwhile, other students give reports and Ben elicits comments on each article. Pete whispers to Mel again when Ben's attention is diverted. He appears to be paying attention to Ben when he talks. Pete smiles at Mel after he gets a compliment for his report. Then Pete is asked to give his report. Leaning back on his chair, he reads an article about a laser, then reads another article about mapping the Grand Canyon. After he finishes he looks around the room. He returns to his magazine as another student gives her report. He leans his head on the desk, half listening. He yawns, shuts his eyes, yawns, then leans back in his chair. He brushes his hair with his hands and rocks back and forth.
>
> In the chair, occasionally looking at a page in the magazine. Betty calls on him for another report, adding,"You probably want to get rid of your D." He reads a third article, this one on prehistoric man.

Pete's style shifts to more involvement in the more "open setting."

> English ("Open")
>
> Pete sits on the back of his chair, chin in hand. He holds a piece of chalk. (As Jean reinforces certain phrases in the discussion, he writes them down on the board). He comments on some of the items, usually negatively ("They know about that."). He raises his hand to voice objections to the writing assignment (he is objecting to its substance, not the work involved). He articulates his objections when the teacher recognizes him, but voices them anyway if her attention is directed elsewhere. He sits down in the chair and talks to Al who announced across the room that he has tickets to a basketball game. He leans back and forth, talking quietly. He

> folds his hands between his knees, quietly whispers to Al, I make out the word "Jean" -- he seems to be mocking the teacher. His feelings about the assignment draw him back into the general discussion. He is objecting to writing an advertisement for something he doesn't like. He speaks out even though Jean doesn't call on him:
>
> Pete. Why should we if we don't like it.
> Jean talks, using Volkswagen commercials as an illustration.
> Pete: They're trying to sell something. We're trying to unsell something.
> Jean responds, Pete persists:
> Jean, I don't think it's fair that we should have to advertise something that we're against.
> Jean is focusing on someone else, so Pete repeats his point:
> Jean, do you think it's fair that we should have to advertise something when we're against it?" He stands up. Pat reiterates the assignment and dismisses the class.

In this class Pete also is "doing the work," but he is considerably more vocal. The example illustrates the thin line dividing initiative and disruption. Pete is basically engaged in the work of the class, though he takes issue with a particular facet of it. He accepts both classrooms as legitimate activities, but finds fault with the way Jean does things, and his critique seems specific to the incident, not an overall judgment. The other "contented conventionals" follow suit, for the most part. They behave in both "closed," and"open" classes, but find in the more "open" setting, more of an opportunity to "talk back."

The "contented conventional" behavior starts to diverge when free periods and field trips are considered. Some boys maintain the sense that these settings are legitimate learning activities; others have trouble. Some boys, for example, gave a standard "learning" explanation for field trips:

> Ronald: Well, I've gone on one (field trip) almost every week in ethnic studies. We learn how people live and what they're like. And things like that -- the way they live.
> Interviewer: Do you think those trips teach you?
> R: Yeah, they're better than not any. The kids learn more.

But others, especially the Lake students, perceived field trips primarily as opportunities for recreation:

> Steve: We went to (an old ship). It was a lot of fun. We had a kid locked in the brig.
> Interviewer: Do you learn stuff?
> S: Yeah, but I don't know why he brought us (there).
> I: That was mostly fun?
> S: Yeah.

> Interviewer: Do you like going on field trips?
> Don: Yes, I enjoy them immensely. It all depends on the teacher you go with.
> I: Do they help you learn?
> D: Yeah -- it's mostly fun and games, though.

Free periods presented a similar problem for some students. Six boys insisted on free time as academic opportunity. They report going to the library. Four boys see their free time as a useful chance to relax and play indoor or outdoor games. But seven "contented conventionals" are not so contented. They say they generally fool around during free periods and they have difficulty understanding what the practice is all about.

> Interviewer: Is there enough to do?
> Pete: Not at this time of year.
> I: Why do you think the teachers here give free time?
> P: I don't know. Maybe they don't want them all in their class at the same time.

In short, the "contented conventionals" are somewhat divided when it comes to free periods and field trips. Some of the boys can integrate these settings into their expectations about what constitutes legitimate learning activities; others are more baffled.

Pattern IV Behavior: "Conventional Strivers"

These six boys stand out because their strong academic orientation and presumed ability (i.e. high IQ scores), lead them to find the annex schools uncomfortable and unprofitable. Each has a unique response to the school, but all of them feel that the teachers do not exert enough control over the students. In their view, the teachers' undue tolerance hampers their own efforts to learn. This response echoes some of the opinions expressed by Jimmy in the "negative" Pattern II: the traditional setting would be better, "next year I'll learn," and so forth. The "conventional strivers," however, seem more conflicted; they actively **voice** their discontent, rather than simply bouncing off existing walls. In this section I focus on three of the most dramatic cases: Turner, Ernest, and Martin.

Turner provides the prime example: he is a disruptive academic. He contributes actively (initiate") to many class discussions and activities, but any contribution is heavily laced with loud jokes, side comments, and interrupting the teacher. In this regard he complements Joseph's verbal aggression (see Pattern II). The principal difference is that Turner is careful actually to complete his work. He aims his barbs at the folly of classroom content: Joseph's responds more to control. Joseph criticizes school rules and disobeys them wherever possible; Paul criticizes the teachers but at the same time is conscious of doing his work. His words and actions are inconsistent. He verbally rejects but actually complies with teacher authority. In short, he is a loudmouth and a bluffer.

Turner's approach can be seen as a clever adaptation to the cross pulls between teacher influence and peer influence. The strategy of loudmouthing yet doing the work honors the peer group expectation of "Don't be a goody-goody; let's fool around" but does not really jeopardize the student's own interest in doing well in school.

Math

Turner and two of his friends stand together in the rear of the room, making fun of a girl they call "Moon goon." They recite songs and stories they have made up about her. Some of these creations I have heard repeatedly. Most of them seem at least as much for each other's benefit as for scapegoating her. This conversation goes on for eight minutes, then Frances recites the name of the boys and gets them to sit down where she wants them (in rows, as opposed to the usual random seating). They are laughing loudly among themselves. Frances is trying to keep them quiet.

Frances: You had some homework (she walks around). I got some homework from Cliff, Turner (she reads off other names).

Turner speaks up saying he and his friends should be excused from class because they finished their homework.

Frances: (getting exasperated by the high noise level) Who are the biggest loudmouths in the sch--class? When you learn to control your voices then you can work on the projects. Turner, you're out of order.

The boys, who have been singing aloud, now hum their song about Moongoon, who is sitting two rows ahead of them.

Frances knows what they are doing and this is part of her impatience with them.

F: Take out a piece of paper. Does everyone have a pencil. (The boys do this) ... All right, we're going to divide by 100 (She will read off a number, the students are to divide it by 100. She begins.)

T: A real toughie here. They should all be smart like me. (After a few more) Mrs. Jennings, this is dumb. Why do we have to do this? (He does though, and volunteers answers as she goes over the problems.)

F: This time we're going to multiply (the same numbers) by 1000.

T: We've done this before. Why do we have to do this again?

Frances is distracted by Miss Dooley who asks her something.

Turner initiates a comparison of answers with his friends.

Frances goes over the multiplication problems.

T: This is getting to be boring. Why do we have school anyway?

F: (going over to her desk) Turner, I want you go do something different this time. (She gives him a worksheet.)

T: Why don't you just give me a free period?

F: No

She indicates he is to work by himself in the rear of the room, and he moves his chair to the corner.

T: How come you have to give me this stuff? We did this last year.

He slides his chair around and makes snide remarks. He exchanges glances with Joseph. Frances reprimands Joseph and Turner gets to work.

In this example Turner combines initiative with disruption. He rejects the task presented by the teacher (understandably), but this rejection occurs within an expressed interest in learning. He complains, but he wants to do something else.

If Turner criticizes but performs the academic tasks presented to him, he is less equivocal about field trips and free time: for him, field trips are boring and there is nothing much to do during free periods:

> Interviewer: What do you do when you have free time.
> Turner: Nothing much. There's not really that much to do. Go down to the library sometimes, or just walk around . . . I think sometimes the teachers gave (free time) because there wasn't that much else to do with the kids . . . .

In sum, he tries to sustain his academic orientation, though veiling his initiative with disruptive rhetoric, and he views the non-academic settings as peripheral and irrelevant to the purpose of school.

Ernest does not verbally disrupt any classes. He follows instructions in both science and math, occasionally showing initiative, sometimes tuning out and staring off into space or talking quietly with a friend. His view of field trips and free time is conflicted. He uses free time to play games, primarily basketball, and he likes field trips, but he finds such activities of dubious worth:

> Interviewer: Do you have enough free time?
> Ernest: For me, yeah, I'd say so.
> I: How about for others?
> E: I'd kinda say maybe they don't know how to make themselves useful or something. They don't know how to like handle their freedom or something. Sometimes I don't, I'd say. Sometimes I get in a little trouble.
> I: Why would you say the teachers give kids free time?
> E: Cause they got nothing else to put in there. And like to study -- to get down and do their homework.
>
> . . . .

> I: Do you go on field trips?
> E: Yeah, pretty much.
> I: What do you get out of them?
> E: Missing classes . . .
> I: Do they have educational value or anything?
> E: In some of them, and some of them no . . . Some of them I just like cause I'm going to be missing a lot of schoolwork.

Ernest seems conflicted. On the one hand he yearns for stricter teachers, but at the same time he likes the release offered by field trips:

> You need a break sometimes. Like me, sometimes I just get bored and sick of school and everything even though I like learning . . . .

Ernest sees some settings as better for him than others. He voiced a popular opinion:

> Interviewer: Do you act differently in different classes?
> Ernest: Well, yeah, because some of the teachers place more restrictions on the kids than other teachers. Like in some classes you can get away with it a lot easier, if you get tired or you get bored and stuff. In other classes you have to get right down and work.

What Ernest describes was not clear in my classroom observations of him, but Martin illustrates the point.

In the "closed" science setting, Martin is more or less a steady worker but in Frances' math class he shows more restlessness and less initiative. He does not disrupt the class, but the focused behavior he displays in science shifts to uninvolvement in math:

> Science Class
>
> Martin is working quietly at his desk, sitting with Mark but not talking. Both of them work steadily. Miss Dooley comes over and talks to them, very critical about something. Martin gets

> up, goes to Miss Dooley's desk, gets a piece of paper, wanders into the corner with Mark. Susan asks them about an experiment; they say, "We're gonna do it now." Martin returns to his desk and works while Mark gets up and goes to the supply closet for some materials. Mark sets up the experiment. Martin is all the time working on written stuff at his desk, occasionally watching Mark. They work a little, talk a little. Except for one trip to Miss Dooley's desk, Martin has been sitting quietly at his desk for the whole period, talking only with Mark and (once or twice when she comes over) to Miss Dooley. (12/12/72)
>
> Math Class
>
> Frances calls a group of five boys together, including Martin. While she talks with Raymond, Martin puts his head down on the table and doodles. He talks about hockey with some other boys. In the final minutes of the period he finally gets his folder and sits with two other students, but he doesn't concentrate on his work. (12/7/72)

Any firm conclusion that Martin's behavior consistently differs from Science to Math would require observations over time. I make this contrast here because it confirms Martin's own explanation of his behavior:

> Martin: In science I sit down and do work. In math I can talk . . .
> Interviewer: Why do you act differently in those classes?
> M: Freedom, probably. In Science you have to stay after. It's the same in English and probably the same in social studies . . .
> I: What would you say is the best way to teach?
> M: The teacher would be not that strict, but strict enough to have the kid do his work.
> I: (probes about science class)
> M: It depends on the work. If I like it, I'll do it. If I don't, I go very slowly. Basically I like the class itself.
> I: (probes about math class) . . . How come you fooled around more in that class?

> M: We could do it without getting in trouble.
> T: What do you like most about that class?
> M: Whenever we learn, we learn something.
> T: What do you like least about it?
> M: The freedom.

This pattern -- more uninvolvement and escape behavior in the looser math class -- is also voiced by Turner.

> Turner: In Mrs. Jenning's class most of the time you can get away with whatever you want. Sometimes she might get a little mad, but most of the time you can get away with what you want. In the science class you can talk a little, but usually there's enough stuff to keep you going in chemistry that's interesting enough so that you don't really do it that often.

Many boys contrasted teachers in terms of strictness. What distinguishes the "conventional strivers" is that they drew the distinction not just in terms of control, but in terms of content as well. In other words, it seems likely that for this group, any differences in behavior between the two classroom contexts was in part the result of an interaction between control and content. The four Hill boys in this group are all quite bright, at least as far as IQ scores suggest. One reason for their lack of involvement in the more "open" math class may be the level of content. The science work seemed pitched at a more challenging level in science, in Math, as Turner clearly illustrates,the content level may be too elementary.

Returning to Martin, he, more than the other "conventional strivers," takes field trips and free time in stride. He generally engages in recreational activities during his free periods, primarily sports. He finds field trips enjoyable and educational ("Whenever they're offered, I go. They help."). In this respect he seems very close to the "contented conventionals", and his positive response to these non-instructional settings seems somehow out of place, considering his view that the school ought to be stricter.

The six "conventional strivers," with the exception of Martin, view free periods and field trips as a waste of time and effort. They usually do the classroom work required of them, but this is less true in "open" settings. There the lack of external control results in more disruptive behavior.

Pattern V Behavior: "Integrated Academics"

These four boys present a varied picture. Given their high fate control and verbal orientation, I expected that the boys would show extensive classroom initiative. In fact, during the observation periods, they acted very similar to the "contented conventionals" -- alternately responding and tuning out. This finding suggests that the distinction between the two patterns may be marginal or else need further refinement.

On the other hand, this group never disrupted classes, whereas some of the "contented conventionals" did, especially if the teacher was looking the other way. In short, although the "integrated academics" do not display any great initiative, they do show less disruptive behavior: their controls seem internalized. Their classroom behavior was in these respects consistent across the "open" and "closed" settings.

I expected the "integrated academics" to give enthusiastic applause to field trips and free time. This proved not to be the case. Yet reservations about these activities seemed partly directed at the way other students abused privileges:

> Interviewer: How would you describe a trip that helps you?
> Mark: Well, I'll tell you about a trip that doesn't help you -- they're putting up an amusement park trip -- I mean that's for two year olds. All they're going to do is wreck the puppets or tease the little kids of something. There's no use in that. Kids have seen that a million times.
> I: It got a lot of sign-ups, though.
> M: Yeah, they did. They just want to get out of class.
>
> Interviewer: How about field trips?
> Mel: A lot of kids a lot of reasons -- kids go -- for only one reason -- to get out of their classes.
> I: Uh huh. How about you?
> M: Well, yeah -- I'll take field trips to get out of classes ... Well, sometimes I get kind of bored just walking around doing nothing, you know -- gets to be a bummer after a while.
> I: Do you think you learn a lot from the field trips?
> M: If you're interested -- after a while you just learn just to be prepared -- never wear anything too heavy, you always bring lot of money in case you get hungry and never goof off on a field trip.
> I: Why is that?
> M: Mr. Phillips expects you to follow him. If you get lost he expects you to find your own way back. He makes that clear.

They interpreted free time in a variety of ways, ranging from "not enough to fill in the schedule" to an opportunity to learn how to "use your time more efficiently." Many of the "contented conventionals" value their free periods highly, but the "integrated academics" are less convinced:

> Interviewer: What do you usually do when you have free time?
> Mel: Oh, either play cards or screw around outside or sit in somebody's class or something. Walk around the hall.

I: Do you think there's enough to do during free periods?
M: Not really, no.
I: Do you think there should be fewer of them?
M: Well, not necessarily, but I think there should be more things to do.
I: Why do you think the teachers here give the kids free periods?
M: I don't know -- it's hard to say.
I: What comes to your mind?
M: Nothing right now -- it's hard.

These four boys, in sum, do not accept free periods and field trips as readily as I had anticipated. In terms of behavior, they seem to act as a variant form of the "contented conventionals." Their claim to separate status rests with the absence of any disruptive classroom activity.

Summary and Conclusions

I collected data on how eighth grade boys at the two annexes behaved in four different settings -- "open" and "closed" classrooms, field trips, and free time. Within the general phenomenon of audience behavior -- responding and uninvolvement, I found a variety of behavior. This behavior did not correspond one-to-one with the previously identified patterns of expectations, but some rough correlations emerged.

The "immersed" boys were largely context-bound -- they responded to immediate situational demands. In class they were compliant, but in the absence of authority they engaged in disruptive behavior. Their responses to field trips and free time were mixed; as a group they tended to view these non-instructional settings as release. In any event, they had difficulty understanding the "why" of such practices.

The "negatives" were somewhat similar to the "immersed" students of Pattern I in that two of them passively complied with the demands of all four learning settings. Two others rebelled more actively, clearly disruptive no matter what the context.

The "contented conventionals" were the largest and most diverse group of boys. Although all of them displayed audience behavior in their classes, and most saw field trips as useful, some boys in this group considered free time purely as an opportunity for escape; they reported "doing nothing" or fooling around.

The other "convented conventionals" saw free time in a more educative fashion: they reported using that time either for studying or for structured recreational activities.

The "conventional strivers" presented a mixed set of behaviors. Turner was verbally aggressive; Ernest seemed consistently well-behaved and studious in his classrooms; the others seemed to do more or less what the "contented conventionals" did. Their response to field trips and free time were mixed.

The "integrated academics" unlike the boys in all other groups, did not show any signs of disruptive behavior, but they did not show any more initiative in class. They generally saw and used free time and field trips as constructive opportunities, but with some reservations.

I have not tried to make refined predictions or correlations between expectations and behavior; I wanted to see if different types of setting -- two instructional, two non-instructional -- generated different kinds of behavior from various students. The two classroom settings elicited some common behaviors across all the students -- largely audience behavior. I am not able to draw firm conclusions about the effect of one type of classroom relative to the other, but I found hints that some students seemed more comfortable in the "tighter" classroom (which does not mean that they learned more). The "looser" classroom seemed to offer both more opportunities for disruption and more opportunities for initiative.

Free periods and field trips generated more extreme responses. For the most part, field trips were construed as valuable and educational, but some students -- the "negatives," the "conventional strivers," and some of the "contented conventionals" treated field trips merely as release, a chance to escape routine. Free periods resulted in still more varied behaviors. Some boys studied, some played games, others wandered around. Those students with little acquaintance with or acceptance of "alternative school ideals" had the most difficulty using free periods as anything but a steam valve on a pressure cooker.

Footnotes to Chapter VII

[1] This characterization is debatable in certain circumstances. In some ways a classroom, because of its sealed-off privacy, can be a less formal situation. I would hypothesize that teachers can be more embarrassed by an uncontrolled class when on a field trip than when inside the school. Yet on the field trips I participated in there was an *ad hoc* quality. The teachers did not pay much attention to the students. Walt, for example, reported that he had at least twice told students on a field trip that they could do whatever they wanted for a period of time and then to return to a designated spot.

[2] I attempted several observations of students during their free periods and on field trips. Because of the greater chance to move around, it was quite difficult to keep track of students. In addition, during free time the student observations were much more obvious, as when I sat down in the Hill's student lounge with four students and started to write about one of them. It seemed impractical to gather complete and accurate data via direct observations, at least given the scope and time constraints of the study.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ANNEX SCHOOLS' SOCIALIZATION EFFECTS

Review of the Study

This study explores two alternative schools in terms of what demands they place on students, what the students assume about education, and how those demands and assumptions are related to behavior. The study consisted of extensive classroom observations and interviews at the Hill and the Lake, two alternative junior high schools in a New England suburb.

What Demands Do the Schools Place on Students? Conventional schools, I argued, were socialization settings based on hierarchy, formality, and achievement press. The two annex schools reduced the formality and achievement press considerably, yet, in contrast to some other alternative schools, retained conventional patterns of adult authority. The traditional authority, however, existed in a fairly personalized setting. I concluded that the annex schools represented a mixed model, poised somewhere between conventional and alternative stereotypes.

I next examined the educational ideologies of the four main subject teachers at each annex. I found that in contrast with some university-based educational experiments,the annex teachers did not experience a strong ideological press -- that is, they concentrated on daily routine without overriding concern for a consistency between practice and ideals. For example, although most teachers were aware of a larger alternative schools "movement," such matters lay at the periphery of their attention.

I then defined the range of learning settings at each annex, finding contrasting combinations of hierarchy, formality, and achievement press. Field trips and free periods were relatively free of formality and achievement press; authority was more subdued or, in the case of free periods, remote. Classroom settings, however, proved more conventional. Despite generally pleasant atmospheres and efforts to individualize instruction, conventional pedagogy persisted. I concluded that the contrasting demands of various learning settings might be a source of dissonance for some students and a source of support for others.

What Do the Students Expect from School? I interviewed all the eighth grade boys at each school in order to define modal patterns of expectations. The boys came from predominantly middle class homes and had above average IQ scores. Most of them were upwardly mobile or stable in their occupational aspirations.

Almost all the boys mentioned jobs as the important end-product of education. Only a few deviated from this instrumental outlook, mentioning goals such as "independence," or "fooling around." I developed five patterns of student expectations, based not only on background variables, but on the boys' assumptions about school: (1) "Immersed" students were locked in their current situation, with little time perspective, and low fate control; (2) "Negative" boys disliked school in general and incorporated the annex schools into that orientation; they tended to view control as external to themselves; (3) A broad heterogeneous group of "contented conventionals" held positive views toward school in general and responded enthusiastically to the annexes; a few felt there was "too much freedom"; (4) "Conventional strivers" were highly academically oriented and upwardly mobile; they tended to reject the annexes because of the schools' low achievement press; (5) The "integrated academics" also were highly academic, but had little trouble seeing the annex schools as a useful and legitimate preparation for the future.

I used the concept of "reference settings" to explain the different patterns. Students tended to view the annex schools in terms of other places: where they had been before, where else they might be in the present, where they were going in the future. Depending on the perceived value and salience of these other reference settings, the annex students viewed their current situation as a positive relief, a detour with potentially harmful effects, or as a form of "benign neglect."

How Do the Students Behave in Various Learning Settings?

I collected data on student behavior in four different learning settings: field trips, free periods, and two classrooms, one "open" and one "closed." I construed student behavior as a kind of compromise between the demands of the various learning settings and student patterns of expectations. In some cases the demands and expectations would be congruent; in other cases they would be discrepant. Some students were locked into particular forms of response; others had a choice of responses at their disposal.

The "immersed" and "negative" boys seemed frozen into particular responses not so much because of any great discrepancy between school demands and their own expectations but because they tended to view their lives as determined by external controls. The "immersed" boys acted in a compliant fashion, acting disruptive in the absence of adult surveillance. The "negative" students either acted disruptive across all learning settings or else withdrew into sullen resignation.

The "contented conventionals" and the "integrated academics" had a variety of responses to choose from. Some of them favored "release" situations; they tended to fool around somewhat in field trips or free periods. Others in this group acted more consistently across settings, defining field trips and free periods as useful practices not just as opportunities for release. The "integrated academics" are noticeable for their lack of disruptive behavior.

The "conventional strivers" exhibit in purest form the discrepancy between school demands and personal expectations. They rejected the legitimacy of non-instructional settings and experienced some difficulty in handling the more "open" classroom setting. For them, the contrast between the annex schools and their assumptions about legitimate learning settings created a tension that was difficult to handle.

Socialization Effects

One premise of this study is that conventional schools socialize children into existing adult roles. The hierarchy, formality, and achievement press of school prepare students for successful participation in the *status quo*.

Alternative schools frequently try to transform the patterns of hierarchy, formality, and achievement press as part of an effort to change the *status quo*. I have described the two annex schools as mixed models of socialization patterns, combining both conventional and alternative elements.

The annex schools, as mixed models, do not represent explicit attempts to change the society: they are not based on radical critiques of the existing order. Yet, in many respects, the Hill and the Lake deviate from conventional school socialization patterns, and it is important to consider them in terms of the range of their socialization effects. How do the annex schools relate to the larger society?

I can imagine two extreme socialization effects of the annex schools. On the one hand, a student might see, for the first time, that there are alternatives to the conventional ways of doing things in education. He or she might begin to take more responsibility for his or her own education, drawing strength from the annex school's supportive atmosphere. The student might begin to see adults as fallible human beings rather than as powerful dispensers of rewards and punishments. Finally, the annex school might increase his or her capacity to sustain a sense of personal worth in the face of adverse institutional constraints. A student might begin to shed his or her authority hang-ups, develop a capacity to respond to others as persons not just as role occupants, and balance his or her excessive competitive behavior. This hypothetical extreme represents something close to my conception of the most desirable socialization effects possible.

Conversely, I can also imagine a dysfunctional extreme. A student might learn to adapt to the reduced formality and achievement press of the annex school but cling to that setting as the only one in which he or she can function. The student might work quite well in the small, personalized annex school situation, but feel helpless and paralyzed when confronted with less supportive conditions. For such a student, the annex school socialization pattern would ultimately diminish rather than enhance any sense of personal efficacy.

The first extreme emphasizes the potential for transfer from the alternative school's internal context to the larger society. The second extreme emphasizes the discontinuities. Both extremes are hypothetical; the actual socialization effects of each annex school probably fall somewhere between these extremes. As a way of exploring the range of socialization effects of the annex schools it seems useful to discuss the students in each of the five patterns in terms of what probable destinies await them in high school.

The Five Patterns in High School. Judging by the students' own responses, they will adapt successfully to high school. Most of them express confidence and assume they will be resilient. The two exceptions are the "immersed" students and the "conventional strivers": they have some doubts about the transition to a more conventional situation. The "conventional strivers'" fears, perhaps, are somewhat unfounded. These boys strike me, at least, as capable but rigid academics who are temporarily out of the homework habit. The "immersed" boys, on the other hand, seem lost even in the small, personalized setting of the annex schools. There seems little chance that these passive students will catch the attention of anybody in the larger high school. The annex schools may have made them more comfortable for a time; it is not clear that they have done much else.

The "negatives" are varied in their own predictions about what high school will be like. Some feel on top of the situation; others are dubious. Their dislike of school will probably continue into the future. My own sense is that those who feel confident underestimate the demands of the local high school, failing to realize that their current situation is in some sense unique. My fear is that these students have "painted themselves into a corner." They have locked themselves into patterns of rebellion or cynical withdrawal. Again, the annex schools have given them personal attention and support, but any gains seem ephemeral.

The "contented conventionals" are a heterogeneous group, most of whom feel they will "bounce back" when they get to high school. Many of them undoubtedly will. But others, oriented toward finding escapes and releases, are more compliant. They may get their B's and C's, continuing to be "contented conventionals" in quite a different sort of institution. For such a group the annex school socialization process does not really challenge the larger society in any way and it is not clear to what extent students develop a sense that they can question their surroundings.

The "integrated academics" already seem context-free in their orientation. They seem to derive strength from their own inner resources rather than from a particular kind of school. The annex schools probably reinforce that strength and help them to sustain it even under adverse conditions. This group's sense of resilience is probably an accurate prediction.

The annex schools, then, have a wide range of probable socialization effects. Some students may blossom in the annex schools and find new interests and strengths to sustain them in high school. For others, especially the passive students, the annex schools may provide immediate support, but it is not clear that these students have derived a sense of personal efficacy for other contexts.

Immediate vs. Long Range Effects. There is no reason to assume that the annex schools' socialization effects must be immediate, or even confined to high school. As many of the annex teachers pointed out, some experiences might not "click" for students until some future point. The "negative" students who dismiss the annex teachers as pushovers might change their mind if they meet an unjust teacher in high school. Or, more dramatically, a "conventional striver" might reevaluate the annex school experience ten years later, when he feels trapped by a high pressure, dissatisfying job, or even in twenty years, when his own child expresses boredom with school. Future events can trigger revisions of attitudes only dimly conceived in the present. In speculating about the annex students' high school careers I have limited the discussion to more immediate socialization effects.

The Relativity of Innovation

The annex schools, like other alternative schools, have reduced the "warfare" of conventional learning environments.

Hierarchy continues, but in a context of less formality and muted achievement press. The examination of different patterns of expectations, various student behaviors in different learning settings, and the probable socialization effects of these two schools underscores the fact that socialization settings have multiple effects, and that these effects are relative to the individual's set of assumptions regarding the proper means and ends of education. Students handled the perceived discrepancies between the conventional and alternative schools in different ways. Some perceived a large discrepancy and handled it by rejecting the legitimacy of the annex schools (the "conventional strivers"). For many of the "contented conventionals" the discrepancy was also large, but they handled it by rejecting the conventional setting, resolving any ambivalence in favor of present enjoyment.

In short, the annex schools (and other alternative schools, I would add) create conflicts for many students, and not all the conflicts are resolved in ways that seem productive for either the student's present or future situation. In planning alternative learning environments, then, it is important to consider the relationships established between socialization demands and the variety of student assumptions about education.

Some Policy Implications.[1] If educators wish to honor their students' tolerance for change (discrepancies, in this context), and if they assume, as I do, that "moderate discrepancies" are productive, they ought to arrive at a definition of "moderate" that is relative to the student's own set of assumptions. How can alternative schools do this?

One teacher at the Hill posed the problem this way:

> If we were going to promote change, try to institute change in the schools, I felt we ought to start where we were and to move in the direction we wanted to move in. There were a couple of other people in the group who wanted to make a clean break with whatever there was and do completely new and radical things and gradually move where you had to move as a result of realities . . . .

This study searches for a middle ground between the two positions. When students come to an alternative school, they bring their judgments about appropriate educational practices. In the group studied, some of those judgments defended conventional practice and rejected alternative practices. With such students alternative schools run the risk of creating discrepancies that are too great for students to handle; they will "defend against" rather than "cope with" the school settings, especially the more innovative ones.

On the other hand, a gradualist approach runs the opposite risk: that the discrepancies created will be too small to expand the student's assumptions about his role as a responsible learner. The need, therefore, is for some middle ground that offers "moderate discrepancies."

The "moderate discrepancy" approach may suggest to some readers a matching strategy, with its connotation of some human engineer identifying needs and providing exactly the right experience needed. This need not be the case. The conclusion drawn here is that alternative settings are not and should not be monolithic. Offering a variety of settings, with different degrees of academic press and different degrees of social control provides students with an opportunity to find their own moorings. This, for example, seems to be the value of course choices. The student can determine for himself which teacher, which kind of setting best fits his particular objectives.

Students, of course, may not always devise schedules where there are "moderate discrepancies." People do not always choose wisely. The teacher, however, can serve not as a human engineer, but as someone who can look over a student's pattern of course selections and push students to be more adventurous or more careful in their choices.

The general idea emerging from this discussion is that a particular institutional context does not in itself facilitate changes in individuals. It may make such change possible, and, in alternative schools, create possibilities denied by a conventional setting. But the institutional context, even if flexible, cannot be expected to socialize all its students identically, changing them by equal amounts. The "moderate discrepancy" approach implies an orchestration of various learning settings, with contrasting demands of hierarchy, formality, and achievement press.

Redefining a Political Perspective

In their efforts to change the larger society, many alternative schools have fallen in the trap of simply trying to reverse the conventional patterns of hierarchy, formality, and achievement press, as if such a reversal constituted both the ideal society and the most effective strategy of attaining that ideal.

The annex schools, in contrast with that extreme, have a more ambiguous political thrust. There is not much political ideology at either school; such as there is remains obscured by more immediate maintenance needs. In one sense the annex schools avoid some of the pitfalls of radical reformers who define social change in either/or terms without leaving room for the ambiguities of clinical practice. I do not conclude, however, that the annex schools -- in some ways more "balanced" than other alternative schools -- have created a socialization setting adequate to the task of helping individuals develop a sense of personal efficacy that allows them to question their surroundings. Some of the students, in fact, seem lost.

One of the primary strengths of the annex schools, it seems to me, is that they work on increasing students' sense of fate control without force-feeding students with doses of ideology. In this way they reduce the risk of forcing students to choose between conventional and alternative purposes and practices. Most of the students do not feel coerced.

In addition, the annex schools are both pleasant and humane, and it seems more possible to increase students' sense of fate control in that context than in a situation where students in fact have little voice in what happens to them. As one Lake teacher put it,

> One of the best ways to prepare them for any sort of future is to make them really strong people now, and make them really secure and confident in who they are and happy with who they are. And I think a lot of kids are able to do that.

That task is formidable in itself, and when addressed to working-class students (traditionally ignored or exploited by the society) it becomes a political act.

To the extent that the annex schools foster the sense of personal efficacy I find so important, they contribute to constructive social change. Yet, at present, both annexes lack a political perspective. Their political thrust seems both unconscious or even inadvertent. Without denying the enormity of problems surrounding the maintenance of an alternative school, I argue that schools -- especially alternative schools -- have some external responsibility. By "political perspective" and "external responsibility" I mean I see a need for the annex schools to define and articulate their purposes regarding the students' transition into other educational settings and the larger society. How should students be prepared for "real world" contexts that are not necessarily pleasant or humane? How can the transient experience of an alternative school provide a source of strength for students as they enter less pleasant circumstances?

It should be emphasized that a clear political perspective does not imply a salient, polarizing ideology. In my view, a viable political perspective, oriented toward changing rather than maintaining the society, should recognize the variation in students' assumptions and their different tolerances for change.

Assuming some responsibility for the transition of students from alternative to conventional situations might take the form of some orientation course about the problems of adapting to future settings (perhaps aided by alternative school alumni) or by some follow-up procedures. The point is that alternative schools can better serve the interests of social change by helping students to develop or sustain a sense of fate control than by espousing an either/or ideological position.

The annex schools have found little time to define their own political perspective. Given their immediate tasks this is not surprising. But if other alternative schools go overboard in terms of the importance of ideology, it does not follow that the annex schools should be exempt from defining a political perspective that acknowledges conflicts in our value system, variation in student assumptions, and the range of their socialization effects. Such a political perspective, it seems to me, is necessary to the task of increasing students' capacity for making choices and decisions about their own education, and this task is central to a socialization process directed at changing the oppressive aspects of our society and maintaining a precious and precarious balance between our competing values.

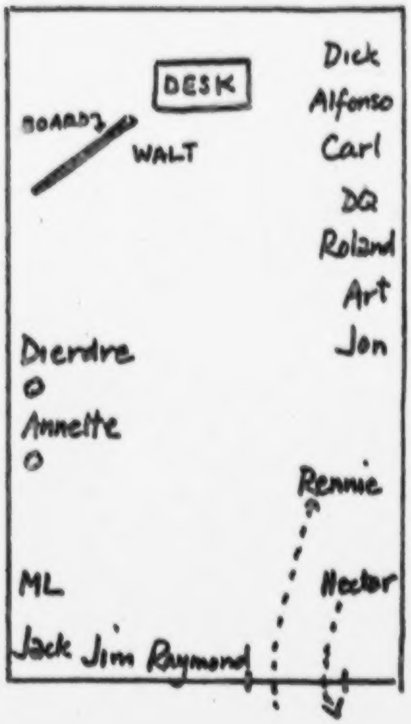
The two annex schools are doing some of this now; there is more to be done.

Footnotes to Chapter VIII

[1] There are some conclusions that ought not to be drawn from the study. This study says nothing about what students learn about different subjects. It is a study of socialization, not of content mastery. No evidence is reported here that says anything about how effective or ineffective in teaching students literacy skills or any particular bodies of knowledge. Thus, this study cannot be used as comment on teacher efficacy, levels of student achievement, or anything of the sort. For example, the observation that the two schools studied have a reduced "achievement press" should not be confused with the conclusion that students do not achieve as much. The reverse argument, in fact, is more compelling. The Coleman study, for example, cited "fate control" as the most important determinant of achievement, and there is every reason to believe that for most students, a sense of fate control is more possible in the annex school environment.

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS



11/1/72
BASIC ENGLISH

Observers:
DQ, ML

8:53 Kids come in; Walt (teacher) wants Carl, Alfonso, Dick to change seats in order to see the blackboard better. They protest and he relents. Susan (teacher) comes in and passes out envelopes to a couple of kids. Walt stands by blackboard and reels off some instructions pertaining to "Impressionistic Poetry." A couple of examples are on the board and Walt explains them (it is simply a process of word association). He interrupts his own instructions and says to Alfonso and Dick:

> "Now I'm not going to let you two sit together if you're going to talk out."

A woman (student teacher) stands in the door and asks to take Hector away. Walt says OK.

8:56 Rennie comes in late; Walt says nothing. Walt continues to explain the two examples of "poetry" -- list of five words associated with, first, "Hot Rod," and "Horses." Walt describes feeling of taking motorcycle helmet off and feeling wim cblow through hair -- this generates some responses from some boys:

Carl: You can't do that, though (referring to the law).
Walt responds, agreeing.
Walt (continuing): How many of you have ever ridden a horse?
(Hands are raised. This is first effort to get involvement from kids, but he doesn't follow it up by drawing further comments; he gets some anyway.)
Carl: My uncle owns three. (W. acknowledges this.)
Dick: Yeah, you feel sick to your stomach when the horse goes fast.

Walt: We take one word and go all the way down. Now we're going to do one together (he asks for topic).
Art: Teachers! (W. puts on board -- some laughter and comments).
Roland: Restrictions (this is the first "impression")
Walt: (putting down restrictions on board) Yes, sometimes teachers put restrictions on students.
Rennie: (correcting) Always.
X : Learning (W. writes down)
X : Old bags (W. puts down)
Dick: Giving homework on Halloween.
(There are laughing reactions all through this topic; lots of kidding.)
W: Alfonso and Dick, don't talk out.

9:04 (giving instructions to students) Have no less than five words and try for 6 or 7. But think of a topic first. If you have trouble, I'll come around to help. (Jimmy comes over and borrows a pen from me).
Art: Hey, Walt, if we took away learning and field trips (referring to list on board) that would be you.
Kids start writing. W. goes over to rear of room.
Rennie: What are we supposed to do, the same thing we did yesterday?
W.: No, the same thing we just did.
Rennie: Not what we did yesterday (he explains further) then goes on to Jimmy and Jack. I can't hear the conversation.
Roland shows his example ("Bobby Orr") to Walt.
Jack: Walt . . . Raymond's copying.
Raymond: I'm not copying.

9:07 W.: How many are not finished? (Hands go up.)
Carol and a friend come in, talk to W. for a moment, then leave.

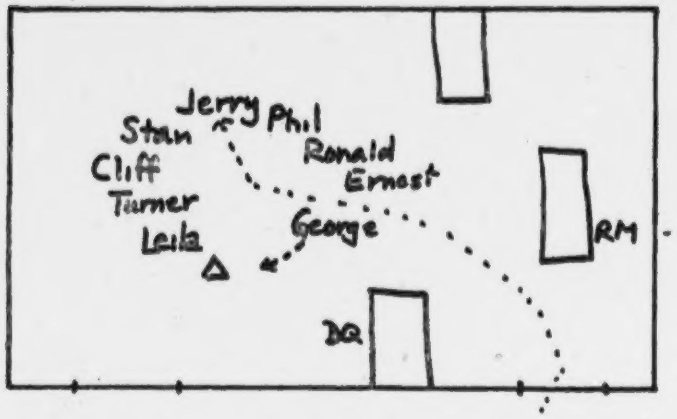
9:10 W: OK, let's see what people have (he asks for people to read their poems aloud; hands go up . . . Art reads his thing on politics -- "Lies ... Promises ... Corruption ... Republican ... Democrat ... Elections"
Roland reads his on Bobby Orr.
W.: Good. That's exactly what I wanted.
Raymond: (reads his on Cities. In between readings W. reinforces the idea of the assignment and gives positive comments.
Jack (when called on): I have the same thing Art did -- Cities.
W. (feeling this would be redundant, I guess) OK. Jimmy, what did you have? (Jimmy reads poem on country.)
Rennie reads a poem on Sea: I am surprised at the words he chooses: choppy, sparkling . . .

Walt has kids do a second poem.
Carl: Walt, I can't think of anything good to do.
Walt: (comes over) OK, the easiest thing to do is persons or things ... sometimes places. (He suggests books.) Meanwhile Alfonso hands out tootsie rolls left over from Halloween.

9:15 Roland goes over to Mac. W. goes out of the room for a moment. Rennie shuts the door on him. W. comes back in, talks to Jimmy and Jack. Roland, finished with second poem (he finished before the assignment was given) goes over looks at bulletin board.

W.: Is anybody else having any more problems?
Dick: I'm done.
Carl: (to me) After four words the ideas just seem to stop.
(to W.) I haven't got any more.
W. (prompts him) What's the opposite of long . . . .
(to whole class) OK, you've got one more minute . . . .

9:20 OK, hand me your papers as you go out the door (kids leave quickly).



10/26/72

COWBOYS AND INDIANS

observers:
DQ, RM

8:52 Leila (teacher) at desk. Boys crowd around her wanting to find out tomorrow's field trip choices. Turner, Phil leave room. The room is laid out differently than I've seen it before: chairs are in rows, facing to my left.

9:00 Leila: Hey, everyone -- let's make a circle of chairs.
Turner: Why not make a triangle or square (he is talking to Cliff, loudly).
L: Hey, Turner, you want to sit in your chair, please?
Turner: How come you didn't ask Cliff?

9:01 Jerry walks in.
L: Jerry, sit down.
Stan: He's got a free period.
L: I don't care: He comes in he stays in.
Phil comes in and says something. Someone else is at door; several kids call at whoever it is: "Don't come in! Don't come in!"
L. goes to door and talks to Andy. While her back is turned, Jerry takes off through the other door, but then comes back in (through regular door) after L comes back.
L: Jerry, I'll see you after class. (He comes over and sits by me, asking, "Did you write down she's mean?")
L "resumes" discussion of Vietnam peace talks, trying to get a statement of what happened. Cliff says something, contributing to discussion -- i.e., he knows something about the proposal for peace.
L. is trying to set up a role play, assigning different positions to different kids in order to clarify different positions.
L: All right, Phil, you be the President of South Vietnam.
Stan: He looks like it.
L. asks questions of kids who give one line responses. Every other comment is the teacher's.

9:07 Frances (teacher) comes in.
F: Can I make an announcement.
Stan: No (pause) No (pause) NO.
She says something about tomorrow's field trip. Cliff asks her a question. Turner wants her to sign them up.

After, L. repeats role assignments. Boys to L's left are very quiet. L. is disputing that the Chinese are actively involved.

Cliff and Turner are making lots of remarks for anybody who wants to hear them. L. asks them to be quiet.
L's questions are factually oriented: she is asking for information.
She tries to elicit distinction between North Vietnamese and the VietCong. She asks who was the old leader of Viet Nam.

9:14 L. repeats role assignments and asks each what he wants out of a Peace settlement.
Turner (as Pres. Nixon) gives quite good, detailed presentation in officious tones.
L: Phil, you've had time to think -- what do you want?
Phil: (as Thieu): I want George to be the next President of South Vietnam.
L. is pulling teeth; she has to get everything very slowly. Phil seems slightly embarrassed that he doesn't know more.
Phil: Just because Turner listens to all those newsreels doesn't mean I do.
L. has to ask more specific questions. "Think," she persists.
Her questions force Phil to clarify the S. Vietnamese position.
Phil responds when pushed. He holds a glider as he talks.
L: Cliff! (Turner and Cliff laugh.) She is calling on him.
X: Five minutes left!
Cliff, as military advisor makes a statement, spurring Frank to volunteer a response. This is the first topical student-student interaction of the period. There is a bit of an exchange between them.
L.: (to Donald) What are you going to want?

9:21 Steve throws glider at Andy as he walks in and stands slightly to L's rear. George throws glider a little way, goes and picks it up, then changes seat. Jerry moves underneath the desk next to me.
L.: Hey, guys! (softly) hold it down!
L. says something to George.
Jerry emerges from under the desk.
L. dismisses class to sign up for trips; most run out door.
L.: Jerry, I'd like to see you please . . . Stan, pick up the airplane you threw.
Phil lingers behind. Stan standing aroung making remarks.
L. is talking to Andy. We get up to leave.

APPENDIX II

DIMENSIONS OF CLASSIFICATION FOR CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Dimensions of Classification for Classroom Observations

If we look at the way most educational research distinguishes between one classroom and another, we find that subject matter is used most frequently. But (especially in an alternative school), it seems reasonable to question whether differentiating among classes on the basis of a subject label get us very far, for such labels can lump together wide varieties of classroom experience. For example, a textbook-recitation approach in social studies may have more in common with the same approach in a science class than with another social studies class based on an inquiry model. The name of a class is simply not a definitive way of discriminating among types of experiences.

Other researchers have held subject matter constant and explored variations in teaching style. Most prominent are the studies focusing on "teacher-centered vs. student-centered" pedagogies.[1] Unfortunately, these researchers have inadequately conceptualized their terms, lumping together a number of different (independent?) attributes into an oversimplified dichotomy.[2] Furthermore, the teacher-centered/student-centered research usually correlates style of presentation with achievement outcomes. The present study focuses not on any such outcome measure, but on what shapes the social process of the school. My concern is not with the antecedents of student test performance but with the socialization process in an alternative school.

Several sophisticated ways of exploring the classroom process have been designed: the work of Flanders, Bellack, and B. O. Smith comes to mind.[3] These researchers have developed differentiated reliable, categories for understanding teacher-student interaction. Yet their approaches have serious weaknesses. Bellack, for example, deals in terms of the "language" of the classroom -- what teachers and students say, not what people *do*. This approach has no way of describing the *contexts* of various classroom activities -- small group projects, individual worksheets, or improvisational activities.

This limit might not exact a heavy price in conventional school classrooms, but it is a fatal weakness when it comes to alternative schools, for alternative school people frequently talk in terms of activities that are not teacher-centered. Flanders, for example, uses eight teacher categories but only two student categories. The assumption that the teacher dominates the students' classroom experience may or may not be applicable to alternative school situations.

With these considerations in mind, I discarded existing research models and category schemes. Instead I focused on areas -- covering both words and actions -- that lay at the heart of most controversies over conventional vs. alternative approaches to teaching. I selected four dimensions: the teacher's orientation toward content (closed ended vs. open ended), the teacher's control system (types of authority invoked), the role relationships established among students (individual vs. collaborative), and the stance of the teacher (aloof vs. interactive).

1. Content orientation. Does the teacher see subject matter in convergent or divergent terms?[4] Is the teacher's lesson organized so that all students are expected to arrive simultaneously at a predetermined destination? Or do a teacher's assignments and questions admit a number of acceptable responses? I call this first convergent style closed-ended; the second, open-ended. In one form, the closed-ended approach is illustrated by the teacher who asks his or her students for right answers, as in solving a math problem. The open-ended approach is illustrated by a teacher who asks students to explore problems that may have no definitive solution. A teacher need not choose once and for all between approaches, to be sure, but the question here is, "To what extent do teachers in these alternative schools use an open-ended approach to content rather than the more familiar fact-oriented type of teaching?"

2. Control system. What sanctions does the teacher impose? For what "infractions"? Are the teacher's rules clear or

ambiguous? Is the teacher's authority rule-centered, or does the authority flow from personal strength and discretion? Or does the teacher invoke some obligation to community as a restraining action.[5] It is possible to make a number of fairly subtle distinctions between types of authority. Lightfoot uses some of the following types:

> Rule centered: "Everybody -- this is an absolute must -- must bring a pen or pencil to every class every day."
>
> Person-centered: "You're wasting my time so we'll make it up after school."
>
> Community-centered: "Steve, you're showing about as much disrespect for the other people in this class as is humanly possible!"

But teachers often employ all three types of authority, and sometimes the source of authority is unclear from what they say. It seems that person-centered authority is always present, implicitly or explicitly: The teacher can never act purely as an arbiter of rules, or as the abstract spirit of the community; the teacher is inescapably one adult expressing personal wishes. Personal authority seems always to be a component of classroom control. (An example: "Billy, come on over and have a seat.")

After analyzing a number of field observations, I collapsed several different sources of authority into two broader kinds of authority -- hierarchical, or role-centered authority and reciprocal authority. If a teacher's influence stemmed from either a specified set of rules, from the individual's personal force, or from his or her implicit superior status as an adult, I classified it as hierarchical authority. When a teacher mentioned obligation to the general school community or respect for his- or herself, I considered it reciprocal authority, implying a conception of a relationship with two-way constraints. I used hierarchical authority as a kind of residual category; that is, I categorized teacher comments as reciprocal only if such an orientation was clearly stated.

3. Role relationships among students. In planning activities for their students, teachers build in various kinds of interaction among their students. For example, when a student is given a worksheet to complete at his seat, he may be either encouraged or discouraged from discussing the topic with other students:

> You're not going to get a mark on these. These are more or less points for discussion. So when you answer the questions don't consult with your neighbor so you can see what your misconceptions are.

This teacher sought to focus on individual performance. In contrast, another teacher set up collaborative relationships among her students:

> Compare our set of circles with your partner's. What are the differences? Why do you think these differences exist?

This distinction between individual and collaborative relationships makes a difference in the way teachers place limits on student behavior. A collaborative framework enables students to talk to each other more freely; it is harder for the teacher to tell if the student's talk is task-related or not. In the individual performance framework, all talking is suspect. (As the chapter on student behavior indicates, opportunities for student initiative differ according to the relationships established by the teacher.)

4. Teacher-stance. Some teachers dispense assignments and sit back, waiting for students to complete their tasks. Other teachers move from student to student helping those who appear to need it. In the first instance, students must pursue the teacher if they wish attention. In the second, the teacher assumes the responsibility of making contact. Paradoxically, perhaps, this does not mean that the more active teacher is more available, for he or she may be occupied with a few students at the expense of others. Thus, we can identify two separate postures on the part of the teacher -- an aloof, detached posture or an interactive one.

In sum, as opposed to research designs that portray classrooms in terms of global characteristics, like "teaching style," the present study looks at a constellation of characteristics (see Figure , below). Moreover, the research conceptualizes classroom activities in terms of action as well as language. It also considers ways of dealing with small group and other more innovative situations than the teacher dominated classroom.

Four Dimensions of Classroom Organization

1. Content Orientation: closed-ended vs. open-ended.
2. Control System: hierarchical vs. reciprocal.
3. Student Role Relationships: individual vs. collaborative.
4. Teacher Stance: detached vs. interactive.

Footnotes to Appendix II

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[2] Bay-Yam, Miriam, *The Interaction of Instructional Strategies with Students' Characteristics*. Monograph #14, Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Research and Development on Educational Differences, Harvard University, 1969.

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[4] Guilford, Jay Paul. "Thre Faces of Intellect," *American Psychologist*, *14*, 1959, 469-479. Jacob W. Getzels and Philip W. Jackson, *Creativity and Intelligence*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962.

[5] Lightfoot, Sara Lawrence. "Politics and Reasoning: Through the Eyes of Teachers and Children," *Harvard Educational Review*, 43, May 1973 (forthcoming).

APPENDIX III

TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

TEACHER INTERVIEW

I. How did you happen to come to (the Lake, the Hill)?
How do you like teaching here?

II. What would you say is the main point of (the Lake, the Hill)?
What are the school's goals (for students, for schools)?

III. How is (the Lake, the Hill) different from the regular junior highs in Whitetown?
   Do kids have more freedom here? In what ways?
   Why is that important?
   What are some other differences?
   What about free time?
   What about activities outside the school building?
   Why are these things important?
   Is the way the teachers act different?
   How do the differences between here and the regular schools help students?
   Do kids learn more here? What do they learn that they don't learn at the East, say? Why do they learn more?
   Do you think the differences between (the Lake, the Hill) hurt students in any way? How about preparation for high school?

IV. Could you tell me what you know about the history of (the Lake, the Hill)?
   What have been the main events of this year, for example?
   What about the change in schedule around Thanksgiving -- what thinking went into that?
   What about (the Lake, the Hill)'s relation to the community?
   What would you say are the major problems here? (Probe for kids, administration, community, other teachers as possible sources of problems)

V. How is (the Lake, the Hill) different from other alternative schools?
   What's special about this school?
   Is this school better than most alternative schools in any way? Is it worse? (Compare with other satellites).
   Do you think all schools should move in the direction of the satellites? Why?
   A lot of alternative schools place a strong emphasis on community. How about this school? What do you mean by "community"?
   In what ways do kids here participate more in making decisions, if they do?

VI. What kind of kids are there here?
- What different groups are there? What is each group like? (Ask T. to sort eighth grade boys along his dimensions, then explain my behavior categories and see what he does with that.)
- Why do you think these kids came to (the Lake, the Hill)?

VII. Let's talk about our own teaching for a minute. How do you usually start your class?
- What would you say are your main goals for the students? What about subject matter goals -- what do you think the students should know in your area?
- How do you try to reach those goals? How do you set up your class usually?
- What do you do when the students are working?
- What sorts of things do you usually reprimand kids for?
- What will you discipline a kid for? What punishments do you give?
- Some teachers say that in order to learn kids need external controls; others say kids should operate on their internal controls. How do you feel about this?
- How would you say your teaching differs from the way the other teachers at (the Lake, the Hill) do things? How about teachers at the regular junior highs?

APPENDIX IV

STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Student Interview Schedule

I. What do you think is the main point of going to school?
   Why is it important to learn things?
   If you didn't have to, would you go to school?
   Why?
How about you personally -- what do you get out of going to school? How about friends? How are they important?
What's your idea of what the perfect school would be like?
   What would you learn?
   What sorts of things would you do?
   What would the teachers be like?

II. What would you like to do when you grow up?
   What sort of job would you like to have?
   What about college?
   Why would you like that job?
What do you think you really will do when you grow up?
   Will you really be able to get the job you want?
Does school help you to get the job you want?
How exactly does it help?
What things might keep you from getting the job you want?

III. Where did you go to school before you came here?
What was that like?
What did you like most about that school? What did you like least?
What do you think was the main reason you wanted to come to this school?
   What made you decide to come here?
How come you came here instead of (the Lake, the Hill)?
What do you think makes this school different from (the Lake, the Hill)?
Before you came here, what did you think it would be like?
   What did you look forward to?
   Did you think it might be hard for you in any way? How?
Have things turned out the way you expected them to? How?
What do you like most about school here? Why?
   What do you like least?

How is this school different from the regular junior high?
   Are the teachers different?
   Is there more freedom?
   Do you learn more?
Does that difference help you in any way? How?
Does the difference between this school and other schools hurt you in any way? How?

IV. What kinds of kids are there here?
Are there different groups of kids? What is each group like?
Do you belong to a group" What do you do with those kids?
Do you hang around with different groups or do you stick mostly with just one group?
   (If more than one group, ask when and why he switches groups.)
What about the girls -- what different groups of girls are there?
   Do the girls act differently from the boys? How?
   Do the teachers treat them differently?
Do some kids around here get in trouble? How?
What about you -- do you ever get in trouble?
Why do you think kids who get in trouble act that way?

V. Do you have any free periods?
What do you usually do when you have free time?
Is there enough to do during free time?
Why do you think the teachers here give you free periods?

VI. Do you go on many field trips?
What do you get out of those trips?
   Do they help you at all?
Why do you think the teachers here give field trips?
Why do you think the teachers here want to teach at an Annex School instead of a regular school?
What's the main point of a special school like this?

VII. Let's talk about your classes. Do you think you act differently in different classes?
   How? What makes you act one way in some classes and another way in another class. (Probe for teacher personality differences, control differences, task differences.)
What do you think is the best way to teach?

I saw you in ____________ the other day, do you remember that?

What were you doing then?

What did the teacher want you to do?

Did you do that?

Did you fool around at all? What did you do?

What do you think makes you fool around sometimes and do the work other times?

What do you like about that class? What don't you like about it?

(Repeat this for all observation periods. Probe any particularly interesting behavior you observed.)

Some people say kids generally go along with what the teacher says; other people say kids generally go along with their friends. What do you think best explains the way you do things?

VIII. Where are you going to school next year?

What do you think that will be like?

What things are you looking forward to?

What things will you miss most about this year?

Do you think it might be hard going there after going here? In what ways?

IX. I'd like to finish up with some information-type questions.

Where do you live in Whitetown?

Is that a two-family house, one-family house, apartment, or what?

Do you have your own room? How many rooms are there in your house?

How many people are there in your family? (Probe for age and sex of siblings and if they live at home.)

What does your father do for a living? (Try to get specifics.)

Does your mother work? What does she do? (Has she ever worked?)

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me; do you have any questions?

APPENDIX VI

DIMENSIONS OF CLASSIFICATION FOR STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Dimensions of Classification
for Student Interviews

Main Point of School: instrumental or expressive; future or present orientation. (And is the future goal and present function polarized, i.e. now friends, later job, or continuous).

Perfect School: Can or cannot perceive alternative. If he can, is alternative fantasy or feasible. What dimensions are salient: reduced authority, physical facilities, content, relationships.

Mobility: aspirations: certain, vague; realistic, unrealistic; high or low. (It may be possible to distinguish between an uncertainty deriving from open consideration of possibilities and a vagueness deriving from not having thought about it).

expectations: discrepancy with aspirations -- if discrepancy, is it moderate or does he swing to opposite pole?

function of schooling: credential vs. competence

obstacles: internal, external; chance or conspiratorial.

Previous Schooling: positive, negative, or neutral attitude. Focus of likes and dislikes: authority, content, specific teachers, type of activity

Reasons for coming to Annex: proximity, friends, external recommendation (parent, teacher), rejection of conventional school, agreement with philosophy, other pragmatic reasons.

Likes, Dislikes: teachers, friends, freedom, field trips, course content

Differences from Conventional School: curriculum, methods, teachers, free time, field trips, size
(Some kids mention false promises here.)
Differences helpful, differences hurtful, mixed

Peer Groups -- membership vs. outsider vs. shifts groups distinguishing factors: teacher oriented (school behavior) vs. student oriented (size, social behavior) perception of girls (this turned out to be a good question on role taking); stereotyped, undifferentiated, remote vs. differentiated, individualized.

Trouble: natural vs. evil doers. Causes: boredom, excessive freedom, innate.
academic recreational

Free Time: opportunity vs. release; reasons: ideological vs. pragmatic; too much/not enough/just right.

Field Trips: educational vs. recreational; polarized or related to classroom; reasons: educational vs. pragmatic.

Reasons of Teachers: pragmatic: easier, less restrictions on them; ideological: better way of teaching

Main Point of School: overcrowding; educational ideology; (community, freedom, experimental guinea pig)

Classroom Behavior -- context bound vs. context free; crucial factors: teacher, presence of friends, subject matter, specific situation, control.

Perceived pressure: teacher influence dominant; peer influence dominant; independence; perceived cross pressure.

Future Schooling: discrepancy with satellite -- authority, academic load, mobility or free time.

Adjustment expectations: hard, easy, ok after get used to it.

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